THE ANATOMY OF EUGENE O'NEILL'S EXPRESSIONISM

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Introduction

The Essence of Eugene O'Neill's Dramatic Theory

Eugene O'Neill writes in a letter to Arthur Hobson Quin:

> "To be called a 'sordid realist' one day, a 'grim pessimistic naturalist' the next, a 'lying moral romanticist' the next, and so forth is quite perplexing--not to add the Times Editorial that settled 'Desire' once and for all by calling it 'neo-primitive', a Matisse of the drama, as it were! So I'm really longing to explain and try and convince some sympathetic ear that I have tried to make myself a melting pot for all these methods, seeing some virtue for my ends in each of them and thereby, if there is enough real fire in me, boiled down to my own technique."[1]

O'Neill obviously attempts many forms and his final achievement is more than a single conventional form of expression. We find him blending realism with mysticism, as in Desire; naturalism with realism, as in Anna Christie; mysticism with symbolism, as in Lazarus Laughed; symbolism with romanticism, as in The Fountain; and so on. As a result we have a complicated, but varied and interesting form that no other dramatist of the day equals. In nearly every play we see a different method tried and executed. Eugene O'Neill is never static, each play carries him up one more rung on the ladder of experiment. What form of expression is at the top of the ladder? Probably O'Neill himself doesn't know. However, in this thesis, I will use the term Expressionism to indicate that final form of technique that is so individually O'Neill's. Expressionism has been applied to O'Neill by Grace Anshutz.

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1. Arthur Hobson Quin, History of the American Drama, Vol. 2, p. 199.

> "If Expressionism may be taken to mean untrammeled presentation of the author's vision of the spirit of man,--a presentation hindered neither by the traditional technique which demands adherence to surface reality, nor by the ultra-modern technique which repudiates reality--then the plays of Eugene O'Neill are expressionistic."[2]

Also, Kenneth McGowan, eminent author, producer and critic, and Robert Edmond Jones, stage designer, call him an expressionist.

> "Expressionist playwrights have already shown this conclusively enough; witness Eugene O'Neill's The Hairy Ape."[3]

Sheldon Cheney sums up O'Neill's reputation in these words:

> "America's one internationally known playwright, Eugene O'Neill, is significant for his achievement in lifting American drama out of a purely provincial or reflective activity (as viewed from Europe); and as the one English writing dramatist who has made expressionism a broadly successful mode... But O'Neill is a phenomenon because everwhere he has challenged the attentions of those who are watching for the dramatist original enough and able enough to restore the theatre to its old eminence and its old freedom... He was a realist first, with a keen selective sense and sometimes an uncanny knack for the revealing unpleasant word; and it is not yet clear that he is to transcend Realism in any great way; but in 'The Emperor Jones, The Hairy Ape, and Lazarus Laughed, he threw off the chains of imitativeness and widened the expressiveness of our stage. He did this with violence and speed and piled-up emotion rather than with serenity and depth; he broke over the old rigidities of well-made-play dramaturgy, without even suggesting a new play-structure with positive virtues, utilizing a form still jerky and unfinished; but he moved audiences, with a new thrill, a fresh revelation, with theatrical directness. That is about all anyone has done toward the form of play writing that is to take the stages of the world 'after Realism'".[4]

What is Expressionism? First of all, it is a new term, having had significance only since the World War. It is a groping

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2. Grace Anshutz, The Drama, April 1926.

3. Kenneth McGowan-Robert Edmond Jones, Continental Stagecraft, p. 21.

4. Sheldon Cheney, The Theatre, p. 513.

word, an effort to describe art 'after realism.' Sheldon Cheney says:

> "Expressionism... means many things to many people,... due to the common confusion in art terminology. For me Expressionism includes all those methods that look to greater intensification of dramatic emotion,[5] to greater theatrical expressiveness, as against those that are designed to imitate life with faithful detail, that give back an interesting representation of actuality. Like the Expressionist painter, who is less interested in the actuality of the object than in some essential quality of structural truth he has divined in it, and then in expressing his own emotions over that, and finally in wrapping all this in some sort of creative 'form' that capitalizes and intensifies all the particular values of paint and canvas; so the new stage director tries to foster an inner truth or quality or rhythm that is in the poet's script, by emotional rather than imitative means, and by utilizing those special things that belong to the stage."[6]

Thomas Craven says:

> "At bottom, its creed is fairly simple; our contacts with nature--the facts of the visible world--for creative purposes are more important than any amount of learning or traditional knowledge. Given a genuine insight into the world of every day experience, it is possible for the artist to dispense with old forms and to create directly, trusting to the pull of such impulses as follow his sensations. So working, the artist inevitably produces new forms."[7]

Grace Anshutz writes: "A study of the plays, which have been labeled expressionistic, yields the suggestion that their dominating quality is emphasis of the inner life behind the surface action."[8] Edward F. Hauch says: "The concentration is everywhere

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5. Italics are mine.

6. Sheldon Cheney, Stage Decoration, Chap. X, p. 99.

7. Thomas Craven, Modern Art, p. 225. (Italics are mine)

8. Grace Anshutz, The Drama, April 1926.

directed on the state of mind, not on the externals of form and finish. If the quickening of the vision into the flesh and blood of life can be accomplished most effectively through violence, the expressionist is little concerned as to what he violates, even if it is good taste."[9] And again: "Externals are often enough a mask for realities much more real. It is the function of a poet, especially if he is an expressionist, to tear away the mask, to wrest nature's last secret from her and reveal her in nakedness complete. The realist's revelations of essential spiritual truth, when he achieved it were the reflex of the corporeal actual reality depicted. The expressionist seeks to depict this spiritual reality direct. Discarding the incidental in phenomena entirely, or almost entirely, in many cases, he concentrates upon the essence of it, and the more completely and audaciously he does this, the more expressionist he is or hopes to be."[10] Also: "In the dramas of the expressionists, elaborate characterization gives way to incarnation of the compelling, demonic essence of the ego. States and processes of mind and of emotion, complexes of the ego, become corporeal and literally articulate. Forces that war within the ego assume visible shapes and the stage becomes the progressively changing state of mind. The emphasis throughout is on mind, not matter."[11]

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9. Edward F. Hauch, The Drama, vol. 16, p. 126.

10. Edward F. Hauch, The Drama, January 1926, p. 126

11. Ibid.

Finally, what Cheney has to say seems particularly applicable to O'Neill:

> "Expressionism, in the larger sense, means expression of the artist's emotion rather than the depiction of the object exciting it; means emphasis on 'form' rather than on observed fact, escape from the limitation of what can be seen with the eye; means intensification, not portrayal of life; means presentative as against representative production, with consequent shift of emphasis (in the theatre), to creative use of the characteristic meanings of the stage art, to movement, color, lighting, acting, as well as words and their 'meaning'; means usually the violation of actuality, the piling-up of emotionally effective incident."[12]

Although expressionism seems to describe O'Neill's ultimate literary style, it is interesting to read some of his own statements concerning his dramatic composition. In an interview with S. J. Woolf, O'Neill says:

> "Up to a comparatively short time ago, as late as the time when Clyde Fitch and his school were popular, for three acts an author would build up a thesis and then in the fourth act proceed to knock over what he had constructed. The managers felt that they know what the public would accept and the plays had to conform to their ideas. The very fact that I was brought up in the theatre made me hate this artificiality and this slavish acceptance of these traditions."[13]

Again he says:

> "I want to get down in words what people think and feel without relying upon the simpler method of using suggested silences. I want to find a way to make them say it in the rhythm of this country."[14]

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12. Sheldon Cheney, The Theatre, p. 512.

13. S. J. Woolf, New York Times magazine, Oct. 4, 1931.

14. Ibid.

O'Neill further illumines the idea of his technique in his note No. 9:

> "Use every means to gain added depth and scope--can always cut what's unnecessary afterwards--and write second draft using half masks and an interlude technique (combinations Lazarus and Interlude) and see what can be gotten out of that--think these will aid me to get just the right effect--must get more distance and perspective--more sense of fate--more sense of the unreal behind what we call reality which is the real reality! The unrealistic truth wearing the mask of lying reality! That is the right feeling for this trilogy if I can only catch it."[15]

This gives us some idea of how O'Neill sets about to gain the intensity of mood that is characteristic of all his plays. We see him achieve his artistic aims rather by emotional than by imitative means. He is artist enough to include in his technique any device ancient or modern that fits his need. He is concerned with the totality of effect, and whether the play demands realism or expressionism, he is versatile enough as a craftsman to use the instruments best suited for each particular play-mood. "Our foremost playwright (O'Neill) is still on experiment bent-experiment is the life-blood of the theatre, just as of the other arts. But theatrical experiment is more costly, requires greater vision, broader confidence, than in the other arts."[16]

The Theatre Guild, New York City, has become the logical laboratory for O'Neill's experimenting. He always knows what

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15. Sophus Keith Winther, Eugene O'Neill, p. 247.

16. Oliver N. Sayler, The Saturday Review of Literature, Feb. 11, 1928.

he wants, and if he uses a radical device it is to achieve his artistic aims, clearly conceived in his mind, but not always conceived in the accepted form. O'Neill's literary standards force him to discard the stereotyped and either borrow from Aeschylus and Shakespeare or create a new form altogether. He is true to his inspiration, which must be expressed as he conceived it. His unusual forms are not for the sake of exploitation.

Eugene O'Neill's dramatic purpose is to convey to his audience an intensity of mood. His plays are enveloped in a tonal unity, a complete concentration on the inward theme. He accomplishes his dramatic purpose,even if he appears technically iconoclastic. His artistic integrity does not permit him to cling to an outgrown mode, and it is fortunate that he has the courage and inventiveness to clothe his ideas in appropriate dress. He never considers the actability of his plays. He writes them as he sees them, and hopes that our limited modern theatre can handle them. Why should we impose limits on our playwrights because of limits in our theatres? O'Neill has "never consciously considered whether a play could or could not be effectively staged."[17]

Quin's summary of O'Neill's technique seems to me to be the most complete.

> "His (O'Neill's) audiences listen spell bound while he violates with success the so-called laws of dramatic technique. The unities of space and time go by the board,

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17. Theatre Arts Monthly, Nov. 1931

> even the mechanical unity of action vanishes as it did at the touch of the great Elizabethans, but for these Mr. O'Neill has substituted a higher unity of action, which might perhaps better be called a unity of impression. This unity is gained through the power of the dramatist to fuse all the 'utterances and objects of the stage,' by the aid of sympathetic actors, into the expression of the motive the dramatist wishes to convey."[18]

Eugene O'Neill has made of himself a melting pot, blending all forms of expression into a unique and lucid dramatic style through which he portrays moods--sometimes tragic, sometimes comic, many times horrible, but always, I believe, intense, convincing, and artistic.

The problem of this thesis is to analyze the technical devices O'Neill uses to achieve this intensity of mood, this tonal unity of effect that is the distinguishing characteristic of his thirty-six plays.

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18. Arthur Hobson Quin, Contemporary Plays, p. 124.

Chapter I

Form of Eugene O'Neill's Plays

O'Neill's intensity of mood is partly achieved through the form of the play itself. Just as the sonnet is best adjusted to serve as "a moment's monument" and the epic best expresses sublime national idealism, so O'Neill's play length harmonizes with the mood of each play. A study of his apprentice plays shows his striving for this harmony; the mature plays show him using it with mastery, and even intensifying its effectiveness by the use of subsidiary devices of form like the monologue and the aside.

A brief history of his apprentice years will show his various attempts--sometimes fairly successful, but oftentimes not--at adjusting the harmony of his mood and play structure. In 1913, Eugene O'Neill, after six months in a sanitarium for tuberculosis, decided he would attempt a literary career and put his resolutions into the form of a one-act play called A Wife for Life. It was written for the vaudeville stage, and he considers it the worst thing he has ever done. It was destroyed. The first play he preserved was The Web, which was printed in a volume called Thirst, in 1914. By this time O'Neill had definitely started on his apprentice group of one-act plays that launch his career as a dramatist. In the volume Thirst, we also find Recklessness, Warnings, and Fog. Soon after this he attempted a long play and finished it, Bread and Butter, but destroyed it. The extant plays of this first group have some intimations of originality, but they are melodramatic, exaggerated and rhetorical.

Later, in 1914, he wrote another full-length play, Servitude, in three acts, but he destroyed this also. Already he had set high standards for himself. Finally, he wrote the one mature play of his apprentice years, Bound East for Cardiff. Then followed a few more disappointing ones that were later destroyed. Among these were, The Dear Doctor, one act, and The Second Engineer, three acts, sometimes called The Personal Equation. In 1915 appeared the one-acts A Knock at the Door, The Sniper, and Belshazzar, a biblical play in six scenes, written in collaboration with a classmate, Colin Ford, at Harvard. These were also repudiated. In 1916 he wrote eight one-acts and one long play. He destroyed The Movie Man, Atrocity, The G.A.M., and Now I Ask You, three acts. In these four he attempted broad comedy technique, but apparently gave it up for once and all, with the exception of Ah, Wilderness! Of the plays that remain of the 1916 group, we have Before Breakfast, Ile, In the Zone, The Long Voyage Home, and The Moon of the Caribbees.

In 1917 O'Neill wrote no plays, only one short story, Tomorrow, and in 1918 he finally wrote his first long play to reach production, Beyond the Horizon. Two one-acts of 1917 were relegated to the wastebasket, Till We Meet, and Shell-Shock, but The Rope, The Dreamy Kid, and Where the Cross Is Made, were written, acted and published. Two of these were later enlarged into longer forms. The Dreamy Kid gave him the idea for All God's Chillun Got Wings, and Where the Cross Is Made, for Gold. In 1919 he wrote three more one-acts that he destroyed, Honor Among the Bradleys, The

Trumpet, and Exorcism. Also in 1919 he wrote Chris Christopherson which was finally to be republished into Anna Christie. With Chris Christopherson his one-act period was definitely closed.

At this point in his development as a dramatist, O'Neill felt that the one-act form was too limited for his ideas of intensity of impressionism. He was dissatisfied with the length of these apprentice plays and already dreamed of such plays as Emperor Jones, Strange Interlude, and Mourning Becomes Electra. He now knew that he must suit the length of the play to the urgency of the play's atmosphere and tonal quality. Surely some of these thoughts were obsessing him as he made this comment:

> "I am no longer interested in the one-act play. It is an unsatisfactory form--cannot go far enough. The one-act play, however, is a fine vehicle for something poetical, for something spiritual in feeling that cannot be carried through a long play."[1]

The Zone, seems to be particularly dissatisfying. It provoked this comment from the awakening artist. "It is a situation drama lacking in all spiritual import... there is no big feeling for life inspiring it."[2]

Definitely he was consciously striving for that hidden inner truth, that quality of atmospheric unity that he was trying to fit into proper forms. In the following letter he shows that he was beginning to see intimations of what he was after--that inner tonal intensity showing the mood of the play itself.

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1. Barrett Clark, Eugene O'Neill, p. 76. (Taken from New York Herald Tribune, November 16, 1924.)

2. Ibid., p. 98

> "... Whereas, The Moon of the Caribees, for example--(My favorite)--is distinctively my own. The spirit of the sea--a big thing--is in this latter play the hero. While In the Zone might have happened just as well, if less picturesquely, in a boarding house of munition workers. Let me illustrate by a concrete example what I am trying to get at. Smitty in the stuffy, grease-paint atmosphere of In the Zone is magnified into a hero who attracts our sentimental sympathy. In The Moon, posed against a background of that beauty, and because it is eternal, which is one of the revealing moods of the sea's truth, his silhouetted gestures of self-pity are reduced to their proper insignificance, his thin whine of weakness is lost in the silence which it was mean enough to disturb, we get the perspective to judge him--and the others--and we find his sentimental posing much more out of harmony with truth, much less in tune with beauty, than the honest vulgarity of his mates. To me The Moon works with truth, and Beyond the Horizon also, while In the Zone substitutes theatrical sentimentalism. I will say nothing of the worth of the method used in the two short plays save that I consider In the Zone a conventional construction of the theatre as it is, and The Moon an attempt to achieve a high plane of bigger, finer values. But I hope to have all this out with you when we meet. Perhaps I can explain the nature of my feeling for the impelling, inscrutable forces behind life which it is my ambition to at least faintly shadow at their work in my plays."[3]

In The Moon of the Caribees O'Neill successfully strove for a definite tonal unity. He struck a certain atmospheric note and maintained it throughout. It was poetic in conception, even though it was not so skillfully done as some of his later plays. In it he used one of his favorite themes--man powerless in the presence of nature. He suggested the loneliness of a pitiful human against the romantic beauty of the background suggested in the title. It is just a fragment, but enough for us to sense the impression that O'Neill had in mind, and it is long enough to let us sense the tonal unity O'Neill felt when he conceived it. He said The Moon of the Caribees was his "First real break with theatrical

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3. Ibid, pp. 82, 83.

tradition. Once I had taken this initial step, other plays followed logically.[4]

At this point in O'Neill's development, he started rewriting plays. He still believed in his original ideas but he became dissatisfied with their forms, so for a few years he changed the forms of several of his one-act plays into forms of various lengths in an effort to adjust the form of his conceptions to the mood. The Rope, a one-act, was changed into Diff'rent, a two-act. This is a significant play. It is rooted in uglinesss and yet a strong effective form of art is evolved from its idea. This seems to be the play that first expresses O'Neill's unique philosophy that "There is beauty even in its (life's) ugliness."[5]

The Dreamy Kid, his last one-act, was expanded in All God's Chillun Got Wings, a two-act play with seven scenes; Where the Cross is Made was changed into the three-act play, Gold and Chris Christopherson into the highly improved three-act play, Anna Christie. In completing his rewritten plays, O'Neill converted four one-act sea plays, Bound East for Cardiff, The Long Voyage Home, The Moon of the Caribbees and The Zone, into the S.S. Glencairn group. These plays were produced as a unit in 1926 by the Provincetown Players. O'Neill seemed to be convinced by this time that the unity of thought and atmosphere was a distinct necessity

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4. Ibid., p. 84.

5. Ibid., p. 90.

to his technique. He felt that the mood of this group was intensified by unifying them.

> "... The individual plays are complete in themselves, yet the identity of the crew goes through the series and welds the four one-acts into a long play. I do not claim any originality, though, for the idea, as Sehnitzler has already done the same thing in Anatol, and doubtless others."[6]

All of this earliest group show originality, daring and intensity, but dramatic details of dialog, plot, and characterization are weak. Even in this earliest group, however, we sense his attempt to convey a unity of impression. He knew what he wanted to convey in the realistic one-acts, and we see him juggling realism with symbolism in a somewhat crude way, but we see that he already senses that realization of a deeper meaning of life than appears on the mere surface of actuality.

Most of the one-acts are no longer interesting, but The Moon of the Caribbees, Bound East for Cardiff, Ile, and Before Breakfast definitely indicate the future O'Neill. He is already playing with certain devices to indicate feelings, moods and meanings that he feels must be shown. By 1919 the length of the play suggested very definitely the tonal mood of the play. He has adjusted form to idea. However, he started to use this technique rather timidly and his first long plays were forged in the accepted form of the day.

O'Neill moved forward to the play of longer length in The Emperor Jones. However, this is considered a short play as its playing time is only an hour. Undoubtedly O'Neill felt that its

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6. Ibid., pp. 92, 93.

intensity of mood and situation, with its ever increasing element of fear, would be unbearable if carried too far. Hence its eight short scenes are all that are required to develop its tonal unity. George P. Baker says that O'Neill, "feeling here the need of a freer form than the three-act or four-act play, ... turns to scenes and begins to substitute suggestions for photography."[7] Diff'rent is short also, being written in two-acts. The intensity of the mood which shows the disillusionment of Emma is swift and cruel and the ending of suicide comes quickly. However, O'Neill very soon turned from this short form. It is appropriate for The Emperor Jones and Diff'rent, but he was beginning to dream bigger and longer dreams that would necessitate longer forms.

He then shifts to the conventional length of stage tradition. Beyond the Horizon is in three-acts. The Hairy Ape is an average length play; however, it is broken up in short, swift scenes, suggesting the class differences that O'Neill so vividly portrays. The First Man is another play molded in the convention form. Anna Christie brought with it several problems of construction, but O'Neill seems to have thought the three-act form was copious enough to handle its turbulent moods of regeneration. Even Desire Under the Elms is written in the ordinary pattern as far as form is concerned.

By 1924 O'Neill emerged as the mature artist with very definite ideas of his own on play construction and length.

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7. George P. Baker, Yale Review, July 1926, pp. 789-92

> "Up to a comparatively short time ago, as late as the time when Clyde Fitch and his school were popular, for three acts an author would build up a thesis and then in the fourth act proceed to knock over what he had constructed. The managers felt that they knew what the public would accept, and the plays had to conform to their ideas. The very fact that I was brought up in the theatre made me hate this artificiality and this slavish acceptance of these traditions."[8]

So he decided, whether the producers approved or not, to write his next plays in his own way. Marco Millions was conceived as a great satirical pageant. O'Neill looks at the orient through the eyes of a westerner and attempts to give a survey of the underlying differences between East and West. No wonder he first thought of it as a play consuming two nights. Finally, however, he condensed it to its present version of one long evening's play--(but probably his first impulse was right, as it is universally criticized as being too long!) It is an enormous theme, a satire on modern western civilization with an Eastern background, and it cannot be briefly told. O'Neill realized this and did not try to compress it.

His next long play was Lazarus Laughed, in which he allowed neither convention nor the modern theatre to limit his ideas. He created scene after scene with no regard for time or the scenic designer. He had in mind only the grandeur of his theme and he expressed it in the play length which seemed appropriate to him. Strange Interlude was a continuation of this same lengthening of play structure. When it was produced in 1926, critics thought it would be preposterous for a play to run continuously for a matinee and a night performance. O'Neill felt, however, that he could not portray this subtle study of

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8. Eugene O'Neill, New York Times Magazine, April 15, 1931.

duplicity in the ordinary three-act play. Consequently he used as many acts as he needed to express the tonal impressionism of this novelistic play. "...And why not?" he said. "Everything is a matter of convention. If we accept one, why not another, as long as it does what it's intended to do?"[9]

Mourning Becomes Electra is the most extraordinary play O'Neill has written. He borrowed the tragic tale of Agamemnon, Clytemnestra, Orestes and Electra. O'Neill has written it into three full length plays comprised of The Homecoming, The Hunted, and The Haunted. He felt that the magnitude of the tragic mood of the play could not be achieved in one evening. He could not show the fear, terror and retribution of the Mannons in an ordinary play, so he made this one literally three evenings long. Stark Young, Arthur Hobson Quinn, John Corbin, and other critics agree that this is O'Neill finest work. Would it have been if it had been compressed into the conventional form?

O'Neill is now engaged in writing an octology. It will cover a considerable period of american history and will concern itself with several generations of the same family. What will be the mood of this gigantic undertaking? On and on O'Neill goes from one form to another, never looking back, but sometimes bringing some earlier technique to add to his conceived dramatic theme. Each play is a definite contribution. Each play is a unit in itself. It is complete in that O'Neill brings all the power and artistic value he has to

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9. Barrett Clark, Eugene O'Neill, p. 171.

make it a complete tonal picture. Every device he uses is used with the purpose to push the conception to its total impressionism.

O'Neill uses additional devices to achieve this appropriateness of tonal unity. Besides the actual play length and form he uses internal devices that serve the same purpose. His use of the dramatic monologue, soliloquy, asides and alternation of scenes is expert. These devices further the moodal intensity of his plays.

In Before Breakfast we have his first attempt at the dramatic monologue. The entire play is one long soliloquy--a tragic monologue. All of the action is subordinate to the futility expressed by Mrs. Rowland. Every shade of darkness if used in this monologue--from the hopelessness of an unsuccessful marriage and of drunkenness to death itself. This device is very effective in this play, as after all, the human soul is alone in the face of great trials. Even if surrounded with people, the person involved feels this isolation that the soliloquy suggests.

Before Breakfast was an apprentice play which helped O'Neill establish his technique of the dramatic monologue. He reached its full expression in The Emperor Jones. This is the story of a primitive who has acquired some of the false veneer of civilization and who is reduced through fear to ultimate destruction. Here the soliloquy is the most effective form of technique, as once again this soul is alone in his terror, lost in the forest of dark doubts and fears. No one can help him. He is alone and this device of soliloquy is a very genuine touch of realism. It helps emphasize the struggle that is going on within one individual consciousness that is overwhelmed by the "strong medicine" or primitive fears.

The Hairy Ape, that relentless picture of a one-sided civilization, shows through the aside and soliloquy, the struggle that goes on in Yank's soul. His impassioned plea for understanding and his wondering why he doesn't "belong" could not be expressed in any other way. The aside here brings out again Yank's very aloneness in a society that is not only antagonistic but also deaf to his pleas.

In Strange Interlude O'Neill uses the aside and soliloquy with greatest subtlety. Here the use is psychological. O'Neill becomes entirely absorbed in the libido of his subjects until the actual realistic world of Nina and her associates disappears and that strange, unreal (yet the only real) world of the subconscious appears to the audience. The aside is one of O'Neill's most startling devices. Yet if the audience accepts it for what it is, it becomes interesting, revealing, and intensely dramatic. After all, what a person actually and realistically says is only a small portion of the truth. What other device could have given us the soul of Nina? True, it is rather like dissecting a soul under a microscope, and perhaps it suggests the scalpel of cold science, yet as a revealing style it is superb. One feels that O'Neill bore these characters no human love, that he was interested in them purely for the sake of vivisecting their poor human souls. It is a play that deals very definitely with those hidden reasons for conduct, and O'Neill clearly, concisely, through the aside shows his audience why. After one sees this play, life becomes more

understandable, because these people's ideas, reasons and feelings have become articulate.

Of course, the aside is an artificial device, but when one goes to the theatre he is supposed to take his imagination with him. If he is intelligent he can instantly adjust himself to the fact that an aside is what the actor is thinking. How else could this important part of life be presented on the stage?

O'Neill seems to sense the aloneness of humanity. He shows through the aside that after all life is an individual struggle that goes on within each heart and O'Neill's use of this 'voice within' suggests this internal thinking better than any other device. Mrs. Rowland, Emperor Jones, Yank and Nina bare their souls with the aid of the aside and the soliloquy.

His device of alternating scenes to suggest a definite mood was first attempted in Beyond the Horizon. The scenes are alternately laid out-of-doors and within the farm house. O'Neill says of this device:

> "They have all accused me of bungling through ignorance--whereas, if I had wanted to, I could have laid the whole play in the farm interior, and made it tight as a drum, a la Pinero. Then, too, I should imagine the symbolism I intended to convey by the alternating scenes would be apparent even from a glance at the program."[10]

Barrett Clark adds:

> "After all, there was nothing strikingly novel in this division of each act into two scenes, one act indoors and out-of-doors; it was a simple way of suggesting a tide-like rhythm in the lines of the characters. Even in this first of his long plays O'Neill was striving for new methods of expression."[11]

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10. Ibid., p. 96.

11. Ibid., p. 97.

O'Neill also uses this same device in All God's Chillun Got Wings. This sudden shifting of quick, short scenes helps to intensify the feeling of racial differences and to draw the audiences attention to the racial differences of fears, feelings and education.

So through the history of O'Neill's plays we find him adjusting the form to the mood. This part of his technique gives his public the numerous and varied play lengths that after all do intensify the idea that is being portrayed. It is not that O'Neill wants new forms, but that he is after the form that will express his ideas most artistically. His use of the dramatic monologue, soliloquy, aside and scene alternation further aids him in giving appropriate dress to his characters and situations. The vehicle simply serves him as a means to express that intensity of mood that each play of his captures. The form of the play must fit the mood that O'Neill is striving to portray. He sums it up in this way:

> "When you read Beyond the Horizon you remarked about it being an interesting technical experiment! Why is it, I wonder, that not one other critic has given me credit for a deliberate departure in form in search of a greater flexibility?"[12]

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12. Ibid., p. 97.

Chapter II

Tonal Movement and Action

In Chapter One, O'Neill definitely attempts to set the outside structure of size and form of his various plots to the kind of impressionism that he has in mind. In this chapter, I shall try to show that after planning his play to the particular length and outside proportion he needs, O'Neill then turns to the working out of definite patterns of internal movements and actions that not only definitely lend themselves to the atmosphere of the piece, but also add to its tonal intensity. I shall divide these devices into, first, pantomime, second, unusual groupings, and third, chorus and dancing.

O'Neill's obvious use of pantomime in the opening scenes of nearly all of his plays shows how much value he places on the pantomimic in portraying his ideas.

> "To him (Eugene O'Neill) the first scene is important from the very beginning. Thus instead of opening with conversation it always begins with some form of pantomime that is vital to the story, symbolic of the theme, and impressive in itself."[1]

In the ordinary play the reader will soon see that much of the story is set forth in the opening scene. This places the actor under heavy responsibility, as the first few minutes of the play are usually unsatisfactory both to the actor and to the audience. By the time the audience has become adjusted to the play and the actors' voices, the first scene is over and many

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1. Sophus Keith Winther, Eugene O'Neill, p. 247.

valuable plot-revealing lines are lost, to the detriment of the play's total effectiveness. O'Neill's actual experience in the theatre taught him a valuable lesson and most of his plays open with revealing pantomime rather than with ineffectual lines.

A most effective use of opening pantomime makes sordid the realism of Before Breakfast. These are the opening directions:

> "Mrs. Rowland enters from the bedroom, yawning, her hands still busy putting the finishing touches on a slovenly toilet by sticking hairpins into her hair which is bunched up in a drab-colored mass on top of her round head. She is of medium height and inclined to a shapeless stoutness, accentuated by her formless blue dress, shabby and worn...
> "She comes to the middle of the room and yawns, stretching her arms to their full length. Her drowsy eyes stare about the room with the irritated look of one to whom a long sleep has not been a long rest. She goes wearily to the clothes hanging on the right and takes an apron from a hook. She ties it about her waist, giving vent to an exasperated "damn" when the knot fails to obey her clumsy fingers. Finally gets it tied and goes slowly to the gas stove and lights one burner. She fills the coffee pot at the sink and sets it over the flame. Then slumps down into a chair by the table and puts a hand over her forehead as if she were suffering from headache. Suddenly her face brightens as though she had remembered something, and she casts a quick glance at the dish closet; then looks sharply at the bedroom door and listens intently for a moment or so.
> "Mrs. Rowland. Alfred! Alfred! You needn't pretend you're asleep. (There is no reply to this from the bedroom, and, reassured, she gets up from her chair and tiptoes cautiously to the dish closet. She slowly opens one door, taking great care to make no noise, and slides out, from their hiding place behind the dishes, a bottle of Gordon gin and a glass. In doing so she disturbs the top dish, which rattles a little. At this sound she starts guiltily and looks with sulky defiance at the doorway to the next room.)
> "After a pause, during which she listens for any sound she takes the glass and pours out a large drink and gulps it down; then hastily returns the bottle and glass to their hiding place. She closes the closet door with the same care as she had opened it, and, heaving a great sigh of relief, sinks down into her chair again. The large dose of alcohol she has taken has an almost immediate effect. Her features become more animated, she seems to gather energy, and she looks at the bedroom door with a hard, vindictive smile on her lips.

> Her eyes glance quickly about the room and are fixed on a man's coat and vest which hang from a hook at right. She moves stealthily over to the open doorway and stands there, out of sight of anyone inside, listening for any movement...
>
> "With a swift movement she takes the coat and vest from the hook and returns with them to her chair. She sits down and takes the various articles out of each pocket, but quickly puts them back again. At last, in the inside pocket of the vest, she finds a letter.
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> "She opens the letter and reads it. At first her expression is one of hatred and rage, but as she goes on to the end it changes to one of triumphant malignity. She remains in deep thought for a moment, staring before her, the letter in her hands, a cruel smile on her lips. Then she puts the letter back in the pocket of the vest, and still careful not to awaken the sleeper, hangs the clothes up again on the same hook, and goes to the bedroom door and looks in."[2]

So, for many minutes after the curtain goes up, the audience sees nothing but pantomime, but we are already aware of what is going on. O'Neill has planted in strong, sad pantomime the frustration and maladjustment that ends in suicide. How much more subtle and telling than a long wordy scene in which Mrs. Rowland would have told her story verbally!

In Beyond the Horizon the pantomime is not so extensively used as in Before Breakfast, but it is just as striking.

> "The curtain rises and Robert Mayo is discovered sitting on the fence... He is reading a book by the fading sunset light. He shuts this, keeping a finger in to mark the place, and turns his head toward the horizon, gazing out over the fields and hills. His lips move as if he were reciting something to himself.
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> "His brother Andrew comes along the road from the right, returning from his work in the fields... He stops to talk to Robert, leaning on the hoe he carries."[3]

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2. Eugene O'Neill, Plays, (H. Liveright, pub.), pp. 245-6-7.

3. Ibid., pp. 15-16.

We already sense that Robert is an introvert, a dreamer, a reader. Andrew in direct contrast is a farmer, a doer. He is an extrovert with no use for Robert's dreaming, and so the essence of the play is expressed in the opening pantomime. Beyond the Horizon is a story of duality, a theme that has always interested O'Neill. From the first pantomimic glimpses the theme is apparent.

In Bound East for Cardiff, the opening pantomime consists of five men sitting on the benches on the forecastle of the British tramp steamer Glencairn. Four men are smoking. Sitting on the top bunk in the left foreground, a Norwegian, Paul, is softly playing on an old accordion. In the lower bunk is a man asleep. And with this pantomime the stage is set for one of O'Neill's most characteristic one-acts.

In another of the Glencairn group, In the Zone, O'Neill used elaborate pantomime as an introduction to the play:

> "Smitty turns slowly in his bunk and, leaning out over the side, looks from one to another of the men as if to assure himself that they are asleep. Then he climbs carefully out of his bunk and stands in the middle of the forecastle fully dressed, but in his stocking feet, glancing around him suspiciously. Reassured, he leans down and cautiously pulls out a suit-case from under the bunks in front of him.
>
> "Just at this moment Davis appears in the doorway, carrying a large steaming coffee pot in his hand. He stops short when he sees Smitty. A puzzled expression comes over his face, followed by one of suspicion, and he retreats farther back in the alleyway, where he can watch Smitty without being seen.
>
> "All the latter's movements indicate a fear of discovery. He takes out a small bunch of keys and unlocks the suit-case, making a slight noise as he does so. Scotty wakes up and peers at him over the side of the bunk. Smitty opens the suit-case and takes out a small black tin box, carefully places this under his mattress, shoves the suit-case back under the bunk, climbs into the bunk again, closes his eyes and begins to snore loudly.

> "Davis enters the forecastle, places the coffee-pot beside the lantern, and goes from one to the other of the sleepers and shakes them vigorously... Smitty yawns loudly with a great pretense of having been dead asleep. All the rest of the men tumble out of their bunks, stretching and gaping, and commence to pull on their shoes. They go one by one to the cupboard near the open door, take out their cups and spoons, and sit down together on the benches. The coffee-pot is passed around. They munch their biscuits and sip their coffee in dull silence."[4]

Also in The Moon of the Caribees, The Long Voyage Home, the other two plays of the Glencairn group the same opening device of pantomime is used. The opening pantomime in this group indicates the secretiveness and other sensations that these men feel in the face of the sea. The loneliness is accentuated by O'Neill's use of a few pitiful remnants of mankind against the inexorable background of the sea. Even the rhythm of the tide is suggested. Surely the nautical background of the play is emphasized in these opening pantomimic scenes.

Desire Under the Elms opens with a character walking across the stage and ringing a bell--a simple device, but enough.

> "This scene allowing time for the pantomime could be played in five minutes, yet in that brief time it has revealed a good deal about the relationship of the three men. It has characterized the father. It has...revealed the dumb but determined rebellion of the two oldest brothers, the fiercer spirit of the youngest and the hatred as well as the fear that all three of them feel towards their father."[5]

At once the right note is sturck for this stern tragedy of puritan New England, which many critics consider O'Neill's finest.

After using pantomime to open his plays, O'Neill then continues its use as the plot unravels. After revealing the mood of play in this manner he continues to intensify this mood by a continued use

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5. Sophus Keith Winther, Op. Cit., p. 253.

of pantomime throughout his plays. Many times only small instances of tonal movement are used, but it is always placed with the idea of further developing the impressionism of the play. For incidental pantomime, the scene in All God's Chillun Got Wings in which Ella, the white girl, and Jim the colored boy, meet and fall in love with each other is a striking example of O'Neill's artistry in this field of expressionism.

> "(... He (Jim) comes back to Ella, and stands beside her sheepishly, stepping on one foot after the other. Suddenly he blurts out)...
>
> "Jim. ... Feel dat muscle!
>
> "Ella. (does so gingerly--then with admiration)...
>
> "(... Finally she takes his hand shyly. They both keep looking as far away from each other as possible)..."[6]
>
> "(They run away from each other--then stop abruptly, and turn as at a signal)... (She kisses her hand at him, then runs off in a frantic embarrassment)."[7]

Here we see the revulsion and yet the irresistible attraction these two people feel for each other and the mood is furthered and brought to a high pitch in this direction.

> "(This (scene) is broken by one startling, metallic clang of the church-bell. As if it were a signal, people--men, women, children--pour from the two tenements, whites from the tenements to the left, blacks from the one to the right. They hurry to form into two racial lines on each side of the gate, right and unyielding, staring across at each other with bitter hostile eyes. The halves of the big church door swing open and Jim and Ella step out from the darkness within into the sunlight. The doors slam behind them like wooden lips of an idol that has spat them out. They stand in the sunlight, shrinking and confused. All the hostile eyes are now concentrated on them. They become aware of the two lines through which they must pass; they hesitate and tremble; then stand there staring back at the people as fixed and immovable

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6. Eugene O'Neill, Nine Plays, p. 93.

7. Ibid., p. 95.

> as they are. The organ grinder comes in from the fight... (She tries to answer, but her lips tremble; she cannot take her eyes off the eyes of the people; she is unable to move. He sees this...) (Her eyes are fixed on the sky now. Her face is calm. She tries to smile bravely back at the sun. Now he pulls her by the hand, urging her gently to walk with him down through the yard and gate, through the lines of people.) (They have reached the curb now, passed the lines of people.) (She is looking up to the sky with an expression of trancelike calm and peace. He is on the verge of collapse, his face twitching, his eyes staring)."[8]

Through this complicated tonal action the lines of racial differences are clearly and distinctly drawn. It seems horrible, cruel and even incredible, but O'Neill is not one to dodge the issue and see this situation through rose-colored glasses.

The unity of the plot of Marco Millions is preserved through incidental pantomime which assumes the form of pageantry. The funeral cortege of the lovely Princess Kukachin moves across the stage, giving a startling and picturesque opening to the play.

> "Scene: A sacred tree on a vast plain in Persia near the confines of India... (A merchant carrying in each hand a strapped box that resembles a modern sample case, plods wearily to the foot of the tree. He puts the boxes down and takes out a handkerchief to mop his forehead...)
>
> "(From the left a Magian, a Persian, dressed in the fashion of a trader, comes in. He carries a small, square bag... He and the latter stare at each other, then bow perfunctorily. The Magian sets down his bag and wipes his brow.)"[9]

This scene is the prologue and after the play of satire on our western methods of business and life, the play is brought to a close by a continuation of the prologue -- the funeral cortege reaches its destination with these stage directions:

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8. Ibid., pp. 110, 111.

9. Ibid, p. 126.

"(A Buddhist, a Kashmiri traveling merchant comes in, puffing and sweating, from the right... He stops on seeing them(the funeral cortege). After eyeing him for an appraising second, the two bow and the Buddhist comes forward to set his pack beside the bags on the others)."[10]

"(They glare at each other insultingly, their hands on their daggers. Suddenly they hear a noise from the left. Their eyes at once are turned in that direction and, forgetting personal animosities, they give a startled exclamation at what they see)...

"(They prostrate themselves, their faces to the ground. A moment later, preceded by shouts, a cracking of whips, and the dull stamping of feet, a double file of thirty men of different ages, stripped to the waist, harnessed to each other waist-to-waist and to the long pole of a two-wheeled wagon, stagger in, straining forward under the lashes of two soldiers who run beside them and the long whips of the Captain and a Corporal who are riding on the wagon, the Captain driving. As they reach the middle of the shade they stop. Lashed on the wagon is a coffin covered with a white pall)...

"(He makes obeisance and prays to the tree as do the Soldiers. He gets up and takes a gulp of water--then, looking around, notices the three merchants--with startled surprise, drawing his sword)...

"(The Christian goes to the wagon and gingerly pulls back the pall from the head of the coffin--then retreats with an exclamation as Kukachin's face, that of a beautiful Tartar princess of twenty-three, is revealed inside the glass. Her calm expression seems to glow with the intense peace of a life beyond death, the eyes are shut as if she were asleep. The men stare fascinatedly."[11]

"(With a great cracking of whips and shouts of pain the wagon is pulled swiftly away. On the ground under the sacred tree three bodies lie in crumpled heaps."

So through the pantomime of the brief prologue and epilogue we see beauty pass by, unappreciated and unloved. Could this play have been presented more dramatically or appropriately?

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10. Ibid., pp. 211,212.

11. Ibid., pp. 213, 214, 215, 216.

In Strange Interlude the pantomime is more subtle. The play deals with woman's duplicity and the manner in which the three men of the play, Evans, Marsden and Darrell react upon one another and upon Nina. The pantomime becomes extremely intense as the interlude is unfolded and O'Neill brings a thousand conflicts to a head with the aid of subtle pantomime in the following scene.

> "Nina. (suddenly with a strange unnatural elation--looking from one to the other with triumphant possession) Yes, you're here, Charlie--always! And you, Sam--and Ned! (with a strange gaiety) Sit down, all of you! Make yourselves at home! You are my three men! This is your home with me! (Then in a strange half-whisper) Ssshh! I thought I heard the baby. (Mechanically, the three sit down, careful to make no noise--Evans in his old place by the table, Marsden at center, Darrell on the sofa at right. They sit staring before them in silence. Nina remains standing, dominating them, a little behind and to the left of Marsden)."[12]

> "Nina. (more and more strangely triumphant) My three men!.. I feel their desires converge in me!.. to form one complete beautiful male desire which I absorb.. and am whole...they dissolve in me, their life is my life...I am pregnant with the three!.. husband!..lover!...father!..and the fourth man!.. little man!... little Gordon!..he is mine too!... that makes it perfect!..."[13]

In this play the overtones are important and the actual business of the play relatively unimportant. It is difficult from the actor's viewpoint. It lies in the realm of suggestion and the pantomime must be envisioned, not seen.

In the final scene the eventual cycle is completed; Nina, Woman, has conquered all three men--Sam, the one that needed her; Darrell, her lover; and Marsden, the one that loved her protectingly. Marsden finally claims her "to rot away in peace." This tonal movement of Strange Interlude can be traced through the violent

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12. Ibid., p. 614.

13. Ibid., p. 616.

beginning scenes to the final resignation and tranquility of dissolution. This tempo is not accidental, but carefully planned and executed.

In Morning Becomes Electra, the opening pantomime is significant, as usual. It is ingeniously interwoven with the music, setting, and dialog. The most striking example takes place in Act II in Ezra Mannon's study. This action, under the watchful eye of Ezra Mannon's portrait, is grim and revealing:

> "Lavinia is discovered standing by the table. She is fighting to control herself, but her face is torn by a look of stricken anquish. She turns slowly to her father's portrait and for a moment stares at it fixedly. Then she goes to it and puts her hand over one of his hands with a loving, protecting gesture.
> "She hears a noise in the hall and moves hastily away. The door from the hall is opened and Christine enters. She is uneasy underneath, but affects a scornful indignation."[14]
> "She turns her back on her mother and marches out the door, square-shouldered and stiff, without a backward glance. Christine looks after her, waiting until she hears the side door of the house close after her. Then she turns and stands in tense calculating thought. Her face has become like a sinister evil mask. Finally, as if making up her mind irrevocably, she comes to the table, tears off a slip of paper and writes two words on it. She tucks this paper in the sleeve of her dress and goes to the open window and calls.
> "She moves toward the door to wait for him. Her eyes are caught by the eyes of her husband in the portrait over the fireplace. She stares at him with hatred and addresses him vindictively, half under her breath. She goes to the door and reaches it just as Brant appears from the hall. She takes his hand and draws him into the room, closing the door behind him..."[15]

The final pantomime in The Haunted of the trilogy surely adds to the grim intensity of the mood. Lavinia, through her pantomime, shows in this scene that actually Mourning Becomes Electra.

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14. Ibid., pp. 711, 712.

15. Ibid., pp. 718, 719.

"(... She ascends to the portico--and then turns and stands for a while, stiff and square-shouldered, staring into the sunlight with frozen eyes. Seth leans out of the window at the right of the door and pulls the shutters closed with a decisive bang. As if this were a word of command, Lavinia pivots sharply on her heel and marches woodenly into the house, closing the door behind her)."[16]

Throughout the entire range of O'Neill's plays we see this use of incidental pantomime to further the mood. O'Neill, however, not only uses this device to open his plays, and to further embroider his material, but he also uses this device of pantomime to carry entire plays to their eventual outcome.

One of his most striking examples of extended pantomime is in The Hairy Ape. I will use the entire pantomimic structure of the play to show how O'Neill depends upon this device to carry this overwrought product of civilization.

The curtain goes up revealing the firemen's forecastle of a transatlantic liner. "The room is crowded with men--a confused, inchoate uproar swelling into a sort of unity, a meaning--." Many bottles are passed from hand to hand. --The ceiling curves down upon the men's heads. They cannot stand upright. This accentuates their natural stooping posture.

At the end of Scene I we find this direction:

"(All the men jump up mechanically, file through the door silently close upon each other's heels in what is very like a prisoners' lockstep...)"[17]

Continuing the pantomime, O'Neill describes Mildred, the

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16. Ibid., p. 867

17. Ibid., p. 49

artificial flower of so-called society, in this way:

"(She starts, turns paler, her pose is crumbling, she shivers with fright in spite of the blazing heat, but forces herself to leave the Engineers and take a few steps nearer the men. She is right behind Yank. All this happens quickly while the men have their backs turned)...

"Yank. (He is turning to get coal when the whistle sounds again in a peremptory, irritating note. This drives Yank into a sudden fury. While the other men have turned full around and stopped dumfounded by the spectacle of Mildred standing there in her white dress. Yank does not turn far enough to see her. Besides, his head is thrown back, he blinks upward through the murk trying to find the owner of the whistle, he brandishes his shovel murderously over his head in one hand, pounding on his chest, gorilla-like with the other, shouting)... (Suddenly he becomes conscious of all the other men staring at something directly behind his back. He whirls defensively with a snarling, murderous growl, crouching to spring, his lips drawn back over his teeth, his small eyes gleaming ferociously. He sees Mildred, like a white apparition in the full light from the open furnace doors. He glares into her eyes, turned to stone. As for her, during his speech she has listened, paralyzed with horror, terror, her whole personality crushed, beaten in, collapsed, by the terrific impact of this unknown, abysmal brutality, naked and shameless. As she looks at his gorilla face, as his eyes bore into hers, she utters a low, choking cry and shrinks away from him, putting both hands up before her eyes to shut out the sight of his face, to protect her own. This startles Yank to a reaction. His eyes grow bewildered)...

"Mildred. (about to faint--to the Engineers who now have her one by each arm--whimperingly)...(she faints. They carry her quickly back, disappearing in the darkness at the left, rear. An iron door clangs shut. Rage and bewildered fury rush back on Yank. He feels himself insulted in some unknown fashion in the very heart of his pride. He roars)... (And hurls his shovel after them at the door which has just closed. It hits the steel bulkhead with a clank and falls clattering on the steel floor..."[18]

. . . . . .

"He stands out in contrast to them, a blackened, brooding figure. He is seated forward on a bench in the exact attitude of Rodlin's 'The Thinker'. The others, most of them smoking

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18. Ibid., pp. 57, 59.

pipes, are staring at Yank half-apprehensively, as if fearing an outburst; half-amusedly, as if they saw a joke somewhere that tickled them."[19]

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"Up the side street Yank and Long come swaggering. Long is dressed in shore clothes, wears a black Windsor tie, Cloth cap... They hesitate and stand together at the corner, swaggering, looking about them with a forced, defiant contempt."[20]

Later the Hairy Ape, not able to stand their attempted superiority any longer behaves pantominically in this way:

"(He turns in a rage on the man, bumping viciously into them, but not jarring them the least bit. Rather it is he who recoils after each collision)...

"(He bends down and grips at the street curbing as if to pluck it out and hurl it. Foiled in this, snarling with passion, he leaps to the lamp-post on the corner and tries to pull it up for a club. Just at that moment a bus is heard rumbling up. A fat, high-hatted, spatted gentleman runs full tilt into the bending, straining Yank, who is bowled off his balance)...

Yank, (seeing a fight--with a roar of joy as he springs to his feet)..(He lets drive a terrific swing, his fist landing full on the fat gentleman's face. But the gentleman stands unmoved as if nothing had happened)...

"(He claps his hands and begins to scream)... (Many police whistles shrill out on the instant and a whole platoon of policemen rush in on Yank from all sides. He tries to fight but is clubbed to the pavement and fallen upon. The crowd at the window have not moved or noticed this disturbance)".[21]

We find Yank imprisoned in a cell:

"Yank can be seen within, crouched on the edge of his cot in the attitude of Rodin's 'The Thinker'. His face is spotted with black and blue bruises. A blood-stained bandage is wrapped around his head."[22]

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19. Ibid., p. 59.

20. Ibid., p. 66.

21. Ibid., p. 72.

22. Loc. cit.

Then in his attempt to escape his own handicaps:

"(Suddenly starting as if awakening from a dream, reaches out and shakes the bars--aloud to himself, wonderingly)."[23]

And, later in the same scene:

"(He sits, the paper in the hand at his side, in the attitude of Rodin's 'The Thinker.' Suddenly Yank jumps to his feet with a furious groan as if some appalling thought had crashed on him--bewilderedly)... (While he has been saying this last he has shaken his cell door to a clanging accompaniment. As he comes to the 'breakin' out' he seizes one bar with both hands and, putting his two feet against the others so that his position is parallel to the floor like a monkey's, he gives a great wrench backwards. The bar bends like a licorice stick under his tremendous strength. Just at this moment the Prison Guard rushes in, dragging a hose behind him)."[24]

"Yank. (comes down the street outside. He moves cautiously, mysteriously. He comes to a point opposite the door; tiptoes softly up to it, listens, is impressed by the silence within, knocks carefully as if he were guessing at the password to some secret rite. Listens. No answer. Knocks again a bit louder. No answer. Knocks impatiently, much louder)...

"(All the men in the room look up. Yank opens the door slowly, gingerly, as if afraid of an ambush. He looks around for secret doors, mystery, is taken aback by the commonplaceness of the room and the men in it, thinks he may have gotten in the wrong place, then sees the signboard on the wall and is reassured)."[25]

"(In spite of his struggles, this is done with gusto and eclat. Propelled by several parting kicks, Yank lands sprawling in the middle of the narrow cobbled street... He sits there, brooding, in as near to the attitude of Rodin's 'The Thinker' as he can get in his position)".[26]

. . . . . .

"On the one cage a sign from which the word 'gorilla' stands out. The gigantic animal himself is seen squatting on his haunches on a bench in much the same attitude as Rodin's 'Thinker.' Yank enters from the left. Immediately a chorus of angry chattering and screeching breaks out. The gorilla turns his eyes but makes no sound or move...

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23. Op. cit., p. 72.

24. Ibid., p. 77.

25. Ibid., pp. 78, 79.

26. Ibid., p. 83.

"(... Yank walks up to the gorilla's cage and, leaning over the railing, stares in at its occupant, who stares back at him, silent and motionless...) (The gorilla, as if he understood, stands upright, swelling out his chest and pounding on it with his fist...) (They stare at each other--- a pause---then Yank goes on slowly and bitterly)...

"(He pounds on the rail with his fist. The gorilla rattles the bars of his cage and snarls. All the other monkeys set up an angry chattering in the darkness)... (He passes one hand across his forehead with a painful gesture. The gorilla growls impatiently. Yank goes on gropingly)... (The gorilla is straining at his bars, growling, hopping from one foot to the other. Yank takes a jimmy from under his coat and forces the lock on the cage door. He throws this open)... (The gorilla scrambles gingerly out of his cage. Goes to Yank and stands looking at him...) (With a spring he wraps his arms around Yank in a murderous hug. There is a cracking snap of crushed ribs--a gasping cry, still mocking, from Yank). (The gorilla lets the crushed body slip to the floor; stands over it uncertainly, considering; then picks it up, throws it in the cage, shuts the door, and shuffles off menacingly into the darkness at left...) (He (Yank) grabs hold of the bars of the cage and hauls himself painfully to his feet--looks around him bewilderedly...) (He slips in a heap on the floor and dies... And, perhaps, the Hairy Ape at last belongs)."[27]

On this complicated pantomimic structure the foundation of the play is laid. The entire story is told pantomimically. Undoubtedly O'Neill uses this device of action to accentuate the false foundations of society with its weakness, cruelty, and eventual collapse.

O'Neill uses pantomime for the basic technique in one more play, The Emperor Jones. Here its use is more obvious and perhaps more artistic than in any other of his plays. He seems to try to tell as much as possible by the use of action. I will use the entire pantomimic structure of this play so that the reader may see how complete the use of this device is in this story of fear.

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27. Ibid., pp. 84-88

"As the curtain rises, a native negro woman sneaks in cautiously from the entrance on the right. She is very old, dressed in cheap calico, bare-footed, a red bandana handkerchief covering all but a few stray wisps of white hair. A bundle bound in colored cloth is carried over her shoulder on the end of a stick. She hesitates beside the doorway, peering back as if in extreme dread of being discovered. Then she begins to glide noiselessly, a step at a time, toward the doorway in the rear. At this moment, Smithers appears beneath the portico...

"He sees the woman and stops to watch her suspiciously. Then, making up his mind, he steps quickly on tiptoe into the room. The woman, looking back over her shoulder continually, does not see him until it is too late. When she does, Smithers springs forward and grabs her firmly by the shoulder. She struggles to get away, fiercely but silently."[28]

Thus in the opening pantomimic scene we really have a resume of the idea back of the entire play. The negro woman symbolizes the negro race constantly on guard and afraid of everything and finally overcome by forces outside of the negro race symbolized by the white man Smithers.

In Scene II the pantomime continues with these directions:

"(Jones enters from the left, walking rapidly. He stops as he nears the edge of the forest, looks around him quickly, peering into the dark as if searching for some familiar landmark. Then, apparently satisfied that he is where he ought to be, he throws himself on the ground, dog-tired)."[29]

Scene III--these pantomimic directions carry us on through this forest of despair:

"Then gradually the figure of the negro, Jeff, can be discerned crouching on his haunches at the rear of the triangle. He is middle-aged, thin, brown in color, is dressed in a Pullman porter's uniform and cap. He is throwing a pair of dice on the ground before him, picking them up, shaking them, casting them out with the regular, rigid, mechanical movements of an automaton. The heavy

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28. Ibid., pp. 3, 4.

29. Ibid., p. 17.

plodding footsteps of someone approaching along the trail from the left are heard..."[30]

This scene ends with:

"(Forgetting the path he plunges wildly into the underbrush in the rear and disappears in the shadow)."[31]

Scene IV opens with:

"Jones tumbles in from the forest on the right.... He looks about him with numbed surprise when he sees the road, his eyes blinking in the bright moonlight. He flops down exhaustedly and pants heavily for a while. Then with sullen anger."[32]

The next direction is:

"(He tears off his coat and flings it away from him, revealing himself stripped to the waist)... (Looking down at his feet, the spurs catch his eye)... (He unstraps them and flings them away disgustedly.)[33]

Then a small gang of negroes enters, and:

"(... Jones, who has been staring up at the sky, unmindful of their noiseless approach, suddenly looks down and sees them. His eyes pop out, he tries to get to his feet and fly, but sinks back, too numbed by fright to move...)"[34]

After the convict scene:

"(The prison guard points sternly at Jones with his whip, motions him to take his place among the other shovelers. Jones gets to his feet in a hypnotized stupor...)"[35]

"(As he shuffles dragging one foot, over to his place, he curses under his breath with rage and hatred)...

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30. Ibid., p. 21.

31. Ibid., p. 22.

32. Ibid., p. 23.

33. Loc. cit.

34. Op. cit., p. 24.

35. Loc. cit.

"(As if there were a shovel in his hands he goes through weary, mechanical gestures of digging up dirt, and throwing it to the roadside. Suddenly the Guard approaches him angrily, threateningly. He raises his whip and lashes Jones viciously across the shoulders with it. Jones winces with pain and cowers abjectly. The Guard turns his back on him and walks away contemptuously. Instantly Jones straightens up. With arms upraised as if his shovel were a club in his hands he springs murderously at the unsuspecting Guard. In the act of crashing down his shovel on the white man's skull, Jones suddenly becomes aware that his hands are empty.)"[36]

The progressiveness of tonal movement is carried further with these directions:

"(Jones forces his way in through the forest on the left. He looks wildly about the clearing with hunted, fearful glances... He slinks cautiously to the stump in the center and sits down in a tense position, ready for instant flight. Then he holds his head in his hands and rocks back and forth, moaning to himself miserably.)

"(Suddenly he throws himself on his knees and raises his clasped hands to the sky--in a voice of agonized pleading)"[37]

Later in the play is the auctioning scene, in which Jones sees the auctioneer and the slave market:

"... The auctioneer holds up his hand, taking his place at the stump. The groups strain forward attentively. He touches Jones on the shoulder peremptorily, motioning him to stand on the stump--the auction block.

"Jones looks up, sees the figures on all sides, looks wildly for some opening to escape, sees none, screams and leaps madly to the top of the stump to get as far away from them as possible. He stands there, cowering, paralyzed with horror. The auctioneer begins his silent spiel. He points to Jones, appeals to the planters to see for themselves. Here is a good field hand, sound in wind and limb as they can see. Very strong still in spite of his being middle-aged. Look at that back. Look at those shoulders. Look at the muscles in his arms and his sturdy legs. Capable of any amount of hard labor. Moreover, of a good disposition,

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36. Op. cit., p. 25.

37. Ibid., p. 26.

intellegent, and tractable. Will any gentleman start the bidding? The Planters raise their fingers, make their bids. They are apparently all eager to possess Jones. The bidding is lively, the crowd interested. While this has been going on, Jones has been seized by the courage of desperation. He dares to look down and around him. Over his face abject terror gives way to mystification, to gradual realization--

"(Jerking out his revolver just as the auctioneer knocks him down to one of the planters--glaring from him to the purchaser).

"(He fires at the auctioneer and at the planter with such rapidity that the two shots are almost simultaneous. As if this were a signal the walls of the forest fold in)".[38]

"(There is a noise of someone approaching from the left, stumbling and crawling through the undergrowth...)(He is well forward now where his figure can be dimly made out... He flings himself full length, face downward on the ground, panting with exhaustion... Jones starts, looks up, sees the figures, and throws himself down again to shut out the sight. A shudder of terror shakes his whole body as the wail rises up about him again... As their chorus lifts he rises to a sitting posture similar to the others, swaying back and forth... Jones can be heard scrambling to his feet and running off...)"[39]

"(...he enters the open space... he moves with a strange deliberation like a sleep-walker or one in a trance. He looks around at the tree, the rough stone altar, the moon-lit surface of the river beyond, and passes his hand over his head with a vague gesture of puzzled bewilderment. Then, as if in obedience to some obscure impulse, he sinks into a kneeling, devotional posture before the altar. Then he seems to come to himself partly, to have an uncertain realization of what he is doing for he straightens up and stares about him horrifiedly...")[40]

"(Lem enters from the left, followed by a small squad of his soldiers, and by the Cockney trader, Smithers... One of the soldiers, evidently a tracker, is peering about keenly on the ground. He points to the spot where Jones entered the forest. Lem and Smithers come to look."[41]

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38. Ibid., pp. 27, 28.

39. Ibid., p. 29.

40. Ibid., p. 30.

41. Ibid., p. 33.

"(A sound comes from the forest. The Soldiers jump to their feet, cocking their rifles alertly. Lem remains sitting with an imperturable expression, but listening intently. He makes a quick signal with his hand. His followers creep quickly into the forest, scattering so that each enters a different spot)."[42]

"(The soldiers come out of the forest, carrying Jones' limp body. He is dead. They carry him to Lem, who examines his body with great satisfaction...)."[43]

If this pantomime were acted out from the beginning to the end of the play, the essence of The Emperor Jones would stand revealed in this one medium. O'Neill makes every movement meaningful in this mosiac of fear. In this play of the black Napoleam we see one of the most finished and effective uses of pantomime in dramatic literature. Whether it is to present a mood as in Desire Under the Elms or to intensify a mood already established within the play, as in Mourning Becomes Electra, or to paint the entire picture as in The Hairy Ape and Emperor Jones, O'Neill's use of this device to further his intended impressionisms is effective and complete.

Besides pantomime, O'Neill is interested in other forms of tonal movement and action. If the play needs straight pantomime he uses it, but sometimes straight pantomime is not altogether effective, so he adds rhythm to his technique and envolves his many uses of the dance within his plays. O'Neill uses dancing of many varieties from the Ballet to the Turkey Trot, and the type of dancing used is always chosen with the idea of aiding and adding to the already established atmosphere of the play.

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42. Ibid., p. 34.

43. Loc. Cit.

It is interesting to note that dancing to intensify the mood was shown early in O'Neill's technique. The first example was his very early one-act, Thirst. The heroine, a professional ballet dancer, wildly dances a tarantella. The entire cast is dying of thirst on a shipwrecked raft, mid-ocean. The drastic situation is emphasized and contrasted by this wild note of rhythm and the mood of the play becomes more intense. Immediately after the frenzied dance she dies of exhaustion.

In the Moon of the Caribees the sex mad yearnings of the group are expressed in dancing. Let us look at these directions:

> "Driscoll. Play us a dance, ye square-head swab! -- a rale, God-forsaken one or a turkey trot with guts to it.
>
> "Yank. Straight from the old Barbary Coast in Frisco!
>
> "Paul. I don't know. I try. (He commences tuning up.)
>
> "Yank. Ataboy! Let 'er rip! (Davis and Violet come back andjoin the crowd. The Donkeyman looks on them all with a detached, indulgent air. Smitty stares before him and does not seem to know there is anyone on deck but himself).
>
> "Big Frank. Dance? I don't dance. I drink! (He suits the action to the word and roars with meaningless laughter).
>
> "Driscoll. Git out av the way thin, ye big hulk, an' give us some room. (Big Frank sits down on the hatch, right. All of the others who are not going to dance either follow his example or lean against the port bulwark).
>
> "Bella. (on the verge of tears at her inability to keep them in the forecastle or make them be quiet now they are out) For Gawd's sake, boys, don't shout so loud. Want to git me in trouble?
>
> "Driscoll. (grabbing her) Dance wid me, me cannibal quane! (Someone drops a bottle on deck and it smashes).
>
> "Bella. (hysterically) There they goes! There they goes! Captain'll hear that! Oh, my Lawd!

> "Driscoll. Be damned to him! Here's the music! Off ye go! (Paul starts playing "You Great Big Beautiful Doll" with a note left out every now and then. The four couples commence dancing--a jerk-shouldered version of the old Turkey Trot as it was done in the sailor-town dives, made more grotesque by the fact that all the couples are drunk and keep lurching into each other every moment. Two of the men start dancing together, intentionally bumping into the other.)"[44]

This bit of dancing helps the Moon reach its ultimate intensity of mood. The rhythm which is not so apparent in the opening lines attains this barbaric, jazz-like swing which is quite consistent with the mood. It is not only consistent, but it adds to the effect O'Neill is striving for in this very effective one-act. He is endeavoring to portray pitiful man as he is against the beautiful background of a tropical night in the Caribees. The play is simply an attempt to paint man in his weakness of mortality against a background of immortality.

In The Fountain O'Neill turns from swing rhythm to a poetic rhythm of interpretive dancing. This beautiful dance is used to bring the play to a vivid climax. These are the directions:

> "The form of Beatriz appears within as if rising from the spring. She dances in ecstacy--the personified spirit of the fountain."[45]

> "Her whole body soars upward. A radiant, dancing fire, proceeding from the source of the Fountain, floods over and envelopes her until her figure is like the heart of its flame. Juan stares at this vision for a moment, then sinks on his knees--exultantly)."[46]

Here the dance is an integral part of the play, adding rhythm and a fitting climax to the theme itself, which is an affirmation of immortality.

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44. Eugene O'Neill, The Great God Brown, The Fountain, The Moon of the Caribbees, and Six Other Plays of The Sea, pp. 215, 216.

45. Ibid., p. 181.

46. Ibid., p. 184.

Versatility is one of O'Neill's strong points and this is surely exemplified in his use of dancing. He turns from the loveliness of the dancing vision of The Fountain to the typical country square dancing appropriate for the characters in Desire Under the Elms. All the characters are there from the native fiddlers, young people, old people, and of course, Cabot and Abbie.

In Desire Under the Elms, Part Three--Scene One, we have the following dance scene which accentuates the tragedy, which in spite of the hilarity of the occasion prevades the atmosphere.

> "In the kitchen all is festivity. The stove has been taken down to give more room to the dancers. The chairs, with wooden benches added, have been pushed back against the walls. On these are seated, squeezed in tight against one another, farmers and their wives and their young folks of both sexes from the neighboring farms. They are all chattering and laughing loudly. They evidently have some secret joke in common. There is no end of winking, of nudging, of meaning nods of the head toward Cabot who, in a state of extreme hilarious excitement increased by the amount he has drunk, is standing near the rear door where there is a small keg of whisky and serving drinks to all the men. In the left corner, front, dividing the attention with her husband, Abbie is sitting in a rocking chair, a shawl wrapped about her shoulders. She is very pale, her face is thin and drawn, her eyes are fixed anxiously on the open door in rear as if waiting for someone.
>
> "The musician is tuning up his fiddle, seated in the far right corner. His pale eyes blink incessently and he grins about him slyly with a greedy malice."[47]
>
> "Fiddler..... (He hesitates just long enough) (A roar of laughter. They all look from Abbie to Cabot. She is oblivious, staring at the door. Cabot, although he hasn't heard the words, is irritated by the laughter and steps forward, glaring about him. There is an immediate silence)."[48]

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47. Eugene O'Neill, Nine Plays, p. 185.

48. Ibid., p. 185.

"Fiddler. (seizes a drink which the Old Farmer holds out to him and downs it) (He starts to fiddle "Lady of the Lake." Four young fellows and four girls form in two lines and dance a square dance. The Fiddler shouts directions for the different movement, keeping his words in the rhythm of the music and interspersing them with jocular personal remarks to the dancers themselves. The people seated along the walls stamp their feet and clap their hands in unison. Cabot is especially active in this respect. Only Abbie remains apathetic, staring at the door as if she were alone in a silent room)...

"Cabot... (Then suddenly, unable to restrain himself any longer, he prances into the midst of the dancers, scattering them, waving his arms about wildly)... (He pushes them roughly away. They crowd back toward the walls, muttering, looking at him resentfully)...

"Fiddler. (jeeringly)... (He starts "Pop, Goes the Weasel," increasing the tempo with every verse until at the end he is fiddling crazily as fast as he can go)...

"Cabot. (starts to dance, which he does very well and with tremendous vigor. Then he begins to improvise, cuts incredibly grotesque capers, leaping up and cracking his heels together, prancing around in a circle with body bent in an Indian war dance, then suddenly straightening up and kicking as high as he can with both legs. He is like a monkey on a string. And all the while he intersperses his antics with shouts and derisive comments)...

"Cabot. (delightedly)... (He pours whisky for himself and Fiddler. They drink. The others watch Cabot silently with cold, hostile eyes. There is a dead pause. The Fiddler rests. Cabot leans against the keg, panting, glaring around him confusedly)."[49]

This is the finest description of Cabot in the entire play. Here the play reaches its intensity and the dance undoubtedly aids the development.

The Great God Brown opens with a dance. The opening scene of the play is:

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49. Ibid., pp. 185, 186, 187.
178, 79, 80

"Mother. (always addressing the Father) This Commencement dance is badly managed... Did you see young Anthony strutting around the ballroom in dirty flannel pants?... (The orchestra at the Casino strikes up a waltz) There's the music. Let's go back and watch the young folks dance. (They start off, leaving Billy standing there)...

"Mother. (suddenly calls back over her shoulder) I want to watch Billy dance."[50]

Later, O'Neill describes Dion as a dancer:

"(He suddenly cuts a grotesque caper, like a harlequin and darts off, laughing with forced abandon)...

"Margaret. Dion's so different from all the others. He can paint beautifully and write poetry and he plays and sings and dances so marvelously."[51]

Also O'Neill uses dancing to indicate the character of Dion, as these lines indicate:

"Dion. Why am I paid to dance. I, who love music and rhythm and grace and song and laughter?"[52]

What device could O'Neill have used better to show the influence of puritanism on this boy. The very name Dion came from the pagan Dionysus, and O'Neill uses the dance to intensify the pagan beauty of his conception.[53]

In Marco Millions, the dancing is part of the pageantry, rich, oriental and colorful. O'Neill uses dancing in this play to gain the beauty and exotic effect of the oriental background. He uses dancing to suggest the loveliness of Princess Kukachin. This time the type of dancing if oriental. Certainly O'Neill uses this languorous rhythm to increase the tonal unity of this pageant.

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50. Ibid., pp. 307-309

51. Ibid., pp. 312, 313.

52. Ibid., p. 315.

53. Barrett Clark, Eugene O'Neill, p. 160.

"Kublai... Music! (the doors are thrown open. The dance music sounds loudly) Go in and dance, everyone! You, too, General! I revoke my declaration of war--unless you learn to dance and be silent! (They all go into the ballroom, Bayan stalking majestically with an injured mien) But dancing makes me remember Kukachin whose little dancing feet--! Shut the doors!)"[54]

"The Mongol Chronicler comes forward to fulfill his function of chanting the official lament for the dead. He declaims in a high wailing voice accompanied by the musicians and by the **Chorus** who sway rhythmically and hum a rising and falling mourning accompaniment..."

"Kublai... Leave her in peace. Go. (The Court leaves silently at his command in a formal, expressionless order. The four priests go first, beginning to pray silently again. They are followed by the nobles and officials with their women coming after. Finally the young boys and girls take up their censers and dance their pattern out backward, preceded by the musicians.)[55]

In the comedy, Ah! Wilderness!, that delightful backward looking play, we find one homely touch of dancing: "Sids face lights up with appreciation and, automatically he begins to tap one foot in time, still holding fast to Lily's hand."[56]

What could be more characteristic of the brother-in-law that "never grew up". Here one direction for dancing gives us a more accurate idea of the man than a page of ordinary description.

From using the dance incidentally, O'Neill turns to the choreography of an entire play. In The Emperor Jones we find O'Neill's most elaborate and effective use of the dance. It is worked out in five formal ballet movements that are a credit to

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54. Ibid., p. 288.

55. Ibid., pp. 301, 302.

56. Eugene O'Neill, Ah! Wilderness! p. 109.

any of the exponents of modernistic, stylized dancing. In the Hedgerow production of this play under the direction of Jasper Deeter, these five distinct dance and ballet forms are used in the following order:

The first ballet is the porter scene:

"Then gradually the figure of the negro, Jeff, can be discerned crouching on his haunches, at the rear of the triangle."[57]

The second one is the convict scene. These are O'Neill's directions:

"(From the right forward a small gang of negroes enter. They are dressed in striped convict suits, their heads are shaven, one leg drags limpingly, shackled to a heavy ball and chain. Some carry picks, the other shovels. They are followed by a white man dressed in the uniform of a prison guard. A winchester rifle is slung across his shoulders and he carries a heavy whip. At a signal from the Guard they stop on the road opposite where Jones is sitting. Jones, who has been staring up at the sky, unmindful of their noiseless approach, suddenly looks down and sees them. His eyes pop out, he tries to get to his feet and fly, but sinks back, too number by fright to move. His voice catches in a choking prayer).

"Lawd Jesus!

"(The Prison Guard cracks his whip--noiselessly--and at that signal all the convicts start to work on the road. They swing their picks, they shovel, but not a sound comes from their labor. Their movements, like those of Jeff in the preceding scene, are those of automatons,--rigid, slow and mechanical. The Prison Guard points sternly at Jones with his whip, motions him to take his place among the other shovelers. Jones get to his feet in a hypnotized stupor. He mumbles subserviently)."[58]

The third ballet is the slave market:

"(He sighs dejectedly and remains with bowed shoulders staring down at the shoes in his hands as if reluctant to throw them away. While his attention is thus occupied, a crowd of figures silently enter the clearing from all sides. All are dressed in Southern costumes of the period of the

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57. Ibid., p. 21.

58. Ibid., p. 24.

fifties of the last century. There are middle-aged men who are evidently well-to-do planters. There is one spruce, authoritative individual--the Auctioneer. There is a crowd of curious spectators, chiefly young belles and dandies who have come to the slave-market for diversion. All exchange courtly greetings in dumb show and chat silently together. There is something stiff, rigid, unreal, marionettish, about their movements. They group themselves about the stump. Finally a batch of slaves is led in from the left by an attendant--three men of different ages, two women, one with a baby in her arms, nursing. They are placed to the left of the stump, beside Jones.

"The white planters look them over appraisingly as if they were cattle, and exchange judgments on each. The dandies point with their fingers and make witty remarks. The belles titter bewitchingly. All this in silence save for the ominous throb of the tom-tom. The Auctioneer holds up his hand, taking his place at the stump. The group strains forward attentively. He touches Jones on the shoulder preemptorily, motioning for him to stand on the stump--the auction block.

"Jones looks up, sees the figures on all sides, looks wildly for some opening to escape, sees none, screams and leaps madly to the top of the stump to get as far away from them as possible. He stands there, cowering, paralyzed with horror. The Auctioneer begins his silent spiel. He points to Jones, appeals to the planters to see for themselves. Here is a good field hand, sound in wind and limb as they can see. Very strong still in spite of his being middle-aged. Look at that back. Look at those shoulders. Look at the muscles in his arms and his sturdy legs. Capable of any amount of hard labor. Moreover, of a good disposition, intelligent and tractable. Will any gentleman start the bidding? The Planters raise their fingers, make their bids. They are apparently all eager to possess Jones. The bidding is lively, the crowd interested. While this has been going on, Jones has been seized by the courage of desperation. He dares to look down and around him. Over his face abject terror gives way to mystification, to gradual realization.)"[59]

The fourth dance pattern is the galley slave scene:

"(He is well forward now where his figure can be dimly made out. His pants have been so torn away that what is left of them is no better than a breech cloth. He flings himself full length, face downward on the ground, panting with exhaustion. Gradually it seems to grow lighter in the enclosed space and two rows of seated figures can be seen behind Jones. They are

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59. Ibid., pp. 27, 28.

sitting in crumpled, despairing attitudes, hunched, facing one another with their backs touching the forest walls as if they were shackled to them. All are negroes, naked save for loin cloths. At first they are silent and motionless. Then they begin to sway slowly forward toward each other and back again in unison, as if they were laxly letting themselves follow the long roll of a ship at sea. At the same time, a low melancholy murmur rises among them, increasing gradually by rhythmic degrees which seem to be directed and controlled by the throb of the tom-tom in the distance to a long, tremulous wail of despair that reaches a certain pitch, unbearably acute, then falls by slow gradations of tone into silence and is taken up again. Jones starts, looks up, sees the figures, and throws himself down again to shut out the sight. A shudder of terror shakes his whole body as the wail rises up about him again. But the next time, his voice, as if under some uncanny compulsion, starts with the others. As their chorus lifts he rises to a sitting posture similar to the others, swaying back and forth. His voice reaches the highest pitch of sorrow, of desolation. The light fades out, the other voices cease, and only darkness is left. Jones can be heard scrambling to his feet and running off.)"[60]

The fifth rhythmic motif is the dance of the congo witch-doctor:

"(... He struts noiselessly with a queer prancing step to a position in the clear ground between Jones and the altar. Then with a preliminary, summoning stamp of his foot on the earth, he begins to dance and to chant. As if in response to his summons, the beating of the tom-tom grows to a fierce, exultant boom whose throbs seem to fill the air with vibrating rhythm. Jones looks up, starts to spring to his feet, reaches a half-kneeling, half-squatting position and remains rigidly fixed there, paralyzed with awed fascination by this new apparition. The Witch-Doctor sways, stamping with his foot, his bone rattle clicking the time. His voice rises and falls in a weird, monotonous croon, without articulate word divisions. Gradually his dance becomes clearly one of a narrative in pantomime, his croon is an incantation, a charm to allay the fierceness of some implacable deity demanding sacrifice. He flees, he is pursued by devils, he hides, he flees again. Ever wilder and wilder becomes his flight, nearer and nearer draws the pursuing evil, more and more the spirit of terror gains possession of him. His croon, rising to intensity, is punctuated by shrill cries. Jones has become completely hypnotized. His voice joins in the incantation, in the cries; he beats time with his hands and sways his body to and fro from the waist. The whole spirit and meaning of the dance has entered into him, has become

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60. Ibid., pp. 29, 30.

> his spirit. Finally the theme of the pantomime halts on a howl of despair, and is taken up again in a note of savage hope. There is salvation. The forces of evil demand sacrifice. They must be appeased. The Witch-Doctor points with his wand to the sacred tree, to the river beyond, to the altar, and finally to Jones with a ferocious command. Jones seems to sense the meaning of this. It is he who must offer himself for sacrifice. He beats his forehead abjectly to the ground, moaning hysterically)."[61]

In these five ballets we see and feel the rhythm intensity. O'Neill obviously uses them to gain a certain effect. He uses the dance to intensify the beating of the tom-tom, to project the power of fear into the audience. It is a successful device as anyone who has seen the play will testify. Aside from the pantomimic skeleton of the play O'Neill adds the beauty and adornment of the dancing. It is never obtrusive but it intensifies the feeling of awe and fear that O'Neill is striving for in the portrayal of the black Napoleon.

Besides the dancing, O'Neill borrows the chorus from Greek tragedy. He not only uses it in its purest sense, but also through unusual grouping of the characters creates many interesting pictures that add to the inner meaning of the play that O'Neill considers its only excuse for being.

In The Hairy Ape the groupings add to the idea of class differences. The groupings intensify the differences in various strata of society. In the scene on Fifth Avenue, after Yank discovers he "doesn't belong", this direction for

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61. Ibid., pp. 31, 32.

grouping is given:

> "The crowd from church enter from the right, sauntering slowly and affectedly, their heads held stiffly up, looking neither to right nor left, talking in toneless, simpering voices. The women are rouged, calcimined, dyed, overdressed to the nth degree. The men are in Prince Alberts, high hats, spats, canes, etc. A procession of gaudy marionettes, yet with something of the relentless horror of Frankensteins in their detached, mechanical unawareness)."[62]

This composite picture, intensified, compact, artificial, representing the culture of the day, stands out in direct contrast to Yank, the brute, the Hairy Ape. A little later on, in the same scene, we have: "(The whole crowd of men and women chorus after her in the same tone of affected delight)."[63] The line, "The crowd at the window have not moved or noticed this disturbance," seems to me the strongest judgment on society as we know it today.

The grouping in Scene Seven is also illumining:

> "Yank. (comes down the street outside. He is dressed as in Scene Five. He moves cautiously, mysteriously. He comes to a point opposite the door; tiptoes softly up to it, listens, is impressed by the silence within, knocks carefully, as if he were guessing at the password to some secret rite. Listens. No answer. Knocks again a bit louder. No answer. Knocks impatiently, much louder)."[64]

For a minute Yank thinks he has solved his problems, only to find out later that he hasn't:

> "(The gorilla is straining at his bars, growling, hopping from one foot to the other. Yank takes a jimmy from under his coat and forces the lock on the cage door. He throws this open)... (The gorilla scrambles gingerly out of his cage. Goes to Yank and stands looking at him...) (Something, the tone of mockery, perhaps, suddenly enrages the animal.

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62. Ibid., p. 69.

63. Ibid., p. 71.

64. Ibid., pp. 78, 79.

> With a spring he wraps his huge arms around Yank in a murderous hug. There is a cracking snap of crushed ribs--a gasping cry, still mocking, from Yank)... (The gorilla lets the crushed body slip to the floor; stands over it in the cage, shuts the door, and shuffles off menacingly into the darkness at left)... (He grabs hold of the bars of the cage and hauls himself painfully to his feet--looks around him bewilderedly)."[65]

Finally, in desperation, The Hairy Ape realizes that society is not civilized after all and returns to the zoo where he thinks he belongs. This final grouping of Yank with the gorilla in the zoo is an ironic tonal that adds intensity, tragedy and futility to the entire play.

All God's Chillun Got Wings is a skillful combining of ingenious groupings. When the curtain rises, the eyes are met with the scene that O'Neill presents with these directions:

> "This idea is intensified by the grouping of the actors. 'In the street leading left, the faces are all white; in the street leading right, all black.' Next it becomes apparent that the conflict is to be limited and involves the conflict of the sexes: 'On the sidewalk are eight children, four boys and four girls. Two of each sex are white, two black.' By thus formalizing his set and the position of the characters, he has told the audience the theme of his story before a word is spoken. He has also generalized the particular, giving scope and significance to his drama beyond that which attaches to the individuals directly involved in the play. The movement of the people, the different quality of the laughter, and the spectacle as a whole with its attendant pantomime, typical of his method referred to in the preceding section, all contribute to the meaning and the understanding of the play."[66] "(They all run away, laughing, shouting and jeering, quite triumphant now that they have made him, too, lose his temper.)"[67] "As if it were a signal, people--men, women, children, pour from the two tenements, whites from the tenement to the left, blacks from the one to the right. They hurry to form into two racial lines on each side of the gate, rigid and unyielding, staring across at each other with bitter hostile eyes."[68]

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65. Ibid., p. 87.

66. Sophus Keith Winther, Eugene O'Neill, p. 255.

67. Eugene O'Neill, Nine Plays, p. 93.

68. Ibid., p. 110.

What could more strikingly tell of these social differences than these novel groupings of the black and white actors. The mob spirit becomes personified and Scene Four shows an intensification of racial fears and prejudicies. Here O'Neill uses straight line to show differences of feeling and separates blacks and whites by placing groups of whites on one side of the stage and blacks on the other. The eye instantly preceives these differences and the mood of the play becomes more alive and penetrating.

The chorus in Mourning Becomes Electra is a curious use of the Grecian chorus of Aeschylus in a puritan setting. The opening scene of Homecoming is made up of a chorus of townspeople. Their purpose is the ancient purpose of the Greek chorus, to make the audience aware of the situation. O'Neill says:

> "These last three are types of townsfolk rather than individuals, a chorus representing the town come to look and listen and spy on the rich and exclusive Mannons."[69]

In the opening scene of the second play of the trilogy The Hunted, the chorus is used again:

> "These people--the Bordens, Hills and his wife and Doctor Blake--are, as were the Ames of Act One of Homecoming, types of townsfolk, a chorus representing as those others had, but in a different stratum of society, the town as a human background for the drama of the Mannons."[70]

The opening scene of the final play of the group, The Hunted, employes the same technique:

> "These four--Ames, Small, Silva and Mackel--are, as were the townsfolk of the first acts of Homecoming and The Hunted, a chorus of types representing the town as a human background for the drama of the Mannons. All five are drunk. Seth has a stone jug in his hand. There is a grotesque atmosphere of boys out on a forbidden lark about these old men."[71]

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69. Ibid., p. 688.

70. Ibid., p. 753.

71. Ibid., pp. 815, 816.

With this technical device, O'Neill achieves what he had in mind when he wrote this note:

> "Must get more distance and perspective--more sense of fate--more sense of the unreal behind what we call reality which is the real reality!--the unrealistic truth wearing the mask of lying reality. Note #16."[72]

In Lazarus Laughed we come to the play with the most elaborate use of groupings and chorus. O'Neill fuses all his technique of grouping in its most complete and ultimate form in this extravagant vision of a play that can't be produced until our limited producing facilities are enlarged. Since it is the most complete of O'Neill's plays in its use of grouping and chorus, I will use O'Neill's entire plan to show this development. There is nothing like it in contemporary dramatic literature.

> "Inside the house, on the men's side, seven male guests are grouped by the door, watching Lazarus with frightened awe. The Chorus of Old Men, seven in number, is drawn up in a crescent, in the far corner, right, facing Lazarus."[73]

> "(His family and the Guests in the room now throng about Lazarus to embrace him. The crowds of men and women on each side push into the room to stare at him. He is in the arms of his mother and Miriam while his sisters and Father kiss and press his hands. The five are half hysterical with relief and joy, sobbing and laughing)... (But Lazarus remains standing. And the Chorus of Old Men remain in their formation at the rear. Wine is poured and all raise their goblets toward Lazarus--then suddenly they stop, the music dies out, and an awed and frightened stillness prevails, for Lazarus is a strange, majestic figure whose understanding smile seems terrible and enigmatic to them.)"[74]

> "Crowd. (who, gradually, joining in by groups or one by one--including Lazarus' family with the exception of Miriam,who does not laugh, but watches and listens to his laughter with a tender smile of being happy in his happiness--have now all begun to laugh in rhythm with the Chorus--in a great full-

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72. Sophus Keith Winther, Op. Cit. p. 246, note #16.

73. Ibid., p. 381.

74. Ibid., p. 386.

throated paean as the laughter of Lazarus rises higher and higher)."[75]

"The room rocks, the air outside throbs with the rhythmic beat of their liberated laughter--still a bit uncertain of its freedom, harsh, discordant, frenzied, desperate and drunken, but dominated and inspired by the high, free, aspiring exulting laughter of Lazarus)."[76]

In Scene Two, joyous dancing is used with groups of Jews as a background:

"From within comes the sound of flutes and dance music. The dancers can be seen whirling swiftly by the windows. There is continually an overtone of singing laughter emphasizing the pulsing rhythm of the dance. On the road in the foreground, at left and right, two separate groups of Jews are gathered. They are not divided according to sex as in the previous scene. Each is composed about equally of men and women, forty-nine in each, masked and costumed as before. It is religious belief that now divides them. The adherents of Jesus, the Nazarenes, among whom may be noted Martha and Mary, are on the left; the Orthodox, among whom are Lazarus' Father and Mother and a Priest, are at right. Between the two hostile groups is the same Chorus of Old Men, in a formation like a spearhead, whose point is placed at the foot of the steps leading to the terrace. All these people are staring fascinatedly at the house, listening entranced, their feet moving, their bodies swaying to the music's beat, stiffly, constrainedly, compelled against their wills. Then the music suddenly stops and the chant of youthful voices is heard:)"[77]

"(He(Caligna) turns to look at the Nazarenes disdainfully and spits on the ground insultingly. The members of the two groups begin to glare at each other. The chorus falls back, three on each side, leaving one neutral figure before the steps. The Priest goes on tauntingly)... (This is followed by an outburst of insulting shouts of accusation and denail from both sides)...

"(This provokes a furious protest from the Nazarenes and insulting hoots and jeers from the Orthodox, penetrated by a scream from Lazarus' Mother, who, crushed in the crowd, sinks fainting to the ground. The Father bends over her. The group of the Orthodox falls back from them. With frightened cries Martha and Mary run from the group of Nazarenes and kneel beside her)."[78]

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76. Ibid., p. 389.

77. Ibid., pp. 389, 390.

78. Ibid., pp. 393, 394.

"(He laughs. The voices of all his Followers echo his laughter. They pour in a laughing rout from the doorway onto the terrace. At the same moment, the Chorus of Followers appears on the roof and forms along the balustrade, facing front. These Followers of Lazarus, forty-nine in number, composed about equally of both sexes, wear a mask that, while recognizably Jewish, is a Lazarus mask, resembling him in its expression of fearless faith in life, the mouth shaped by laughter. The Chorus of Followers, seven in number, all men, have identical masks of double size, as before. The Period of all these masks is anywhere between Youth and Manhood (or Womanhood). The music continues to come from within. Laughing, the Followers dance to it in weaving patterns on the terrace. They are dressed in bright-colored diaphanous robes. Their chorused laughter, now high and clear, now dying to a humming murmur, stresses the rhythmic flow of the dance)."[79]

"(Their former distinctions of Nazarenes and Orthodox are now entirely forgotten. The members of Lazarus' family are grouped in the center as if nothing had ever happened to separate them. The Chorus of Old Men is again joined in its spearhead formation at the stairs. Apparent first in this Chorus, a queer excitement begins to pervade this mob. They begin to weave in and out, clasping each other's hands now and then, moving mechanically in jerky steps to the music in a grotesque sort of marionettes' country dance. At first this is slow but it momentarily becomes more hectic and peculiar. They raise clenched fists or hands distended into threatening talons. Their voices sound thick and harsh and animal-like with anger as they mutter and growl, each one aloud to himself or herself)."[80]

"(With cries of rage the two groups rush on one another. There is a confused tumult of yells, groans, curses, the shrieks of women, the sounds of blows as they meet in a pushing, whirling, struggling mass in which individual figures are indistinguishable. Knives and swords flash above the heads of the mass, hands in every tense attitude of striking, clutching, tearing are seen upraised. As the fight is at its height a Roman Centurion and a squad of eight Soldiers come tramping up at the double-quick. They are all masked. These Roman masks now and henceforth in the play are carried out according to the same formula of Seven Periods, Seven Types, as those of the Jews seen previously, except that the basis of each face is Roman--heavy, domineering, self-complacent, the face of a confident dominant race. The Centurion differs from his soldiers only in being more individualized. He is middle-aged, his soldiers belong to the Period of Manhood. All are of the Simple, Ignorant Type)."[81]

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79. Ibid., pp. 393, 394.

80. Ibid., pp. 395-396.

81. Ibid., p. 399.

"Lazarus. (as if he were answering not the centurion but the commandor of his fate from the sky) Yes'. (he walks down the narrow stairs and, Miriam following him, comes down the path to the road. He goes and kneels for a moment each beside the bodies of his Father, Mother and Sisters and kisses each in turn on the forehead. For a moment the struggle with his grief can be seen in his face. Then he looks up to the stars and, as if answering a question, again says simply and acceptingly) Yes! (Then exultantly) Yes!! (And begins to laugh from the depths of his exalted spirit. The laughter of his chorus and then of his Followers echoes his. The music and dancing begin again. The Centurion grins sheepishly. The Soldiers chuckle. The Centurion laughs awkwardly. The Soldiers laugh. The music from the house and the laughter of the Followers grow louder. The infection spreads to the Chorus of Old Men whose swaying grief falls into the rhythm of the laughter and music as does that of the mourners)."[82]

"(... That of the Chorus of Old Men and of the Crowd falters and breaks into lamenting grief again, guilt-stricken because of its laughter)."[83]

"(The music and dancing and voices cease. The lights in the windows, which have been growing dim, go out. There is a second of complete, death-like silence. The mourning folk in the foreground are frozen figures of grief. Then a sudden swelling chorus of forlorn bewilderment, a cry of lost children comes from the Chorus of Followers and the Followers themselves. They huddle into groups on the roof and on the terrace. They stretch their arms out in every direction supplicatingly."[84]

"On the left, the Chorus of Greeks is grouped, seven in number, facing front, in the spearhead formation. As before the Chorus wears masks double the life size of the Crowd masks. They are all of the Proud Self-Reliant type, in the period of Young Manhood."[85]

"(The music and crushing of cymbals and the ferment of passions around him cause him to lose all control over himself. He gives a crazy leap in the air and begins to dance grotesquely and chant in a thick voice)"[86]

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82. Ibid., pp. 401, 402.

83. Ibid., p. 403.

84. Ibid., p. 404.

85. Ibid., p. 406.

86. Ibid., p. 413.

> "(... This Chorus wears, in double size, the laughing masks of Lazarus' Followers in the same period and type as in the preceding scene, except that here the mask of each member of the Chorus has a different racial basis--Egyptian, Syrian, Cappadocian, Lydian, Phrygian, Cilician, Parthian... They whirl in between the Soldiers and Crowd, forcing them back from each other, teasing them, sifting into the Crowd, their Chorus in a half circle, confronting the Chorus of Greeks)."[87]

> "(He (Lazarus) laughs and again his voice leads and cominates the rhythmic chorus of theirs. The music and dancing begin again)."

> "(She (Miriam) falls back into his arms. Gently he lets her body sink until it rests against the steps of the dais. Tiberius rises from his couch to bend over with cruel gloating. Pompeia steps nearer to Lazarus, staring at him mockingly. Caligula hops to her side, looking from Lazarus to Miriam. The half-circle of masked figures moves closer, straining forward and downward as if to overwhelm the two figures at the foot of the dais with their concentrated death wish)."[88]

Here we find O'Neill's use of the dance, grouping and chorus in its most complicated form. The theme of joyous affirmation of life vs. the dark and evil misunderstandings of this human life are presented by the use of these devices. Why shouldn't life's expression be joyous? In this play O'Neill's dislike for and distrust for puritanism find fullest expression. The thematic mood is created through the dancing and chorus and they not only intensify the feeling, but create the action of the play. Perhaps some day the "Imaginary Theatre" with the artist director will produce this dance-drama, called a "Modern Miracle Play." The producer should also be a choreographer to stage it adequately. May this dream play of a glorious imagination find its proper setting!

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87. Ibid., p. 414.

88. Ibid., p. 414.

Whether it is pantomime, unusual grouping, dancing, or the chorus in these most modern of plays, we sense the same purpose for O'Neill's use of these devices. It is always to intensify the mood already created or to create the mood itself. The groups are never extraneous but always fitting and appropriate. They embroider the whole cloth of his dramatic compositions, making it more colorful, effective and beautiful.

Chapter III

The Stage Picture - Settings (Visual Imagery)

Eugene O'Neill, as a product of the theatre is well aware of the value of all that meets the eye as far as the production is concerned. The visual sense is the first to receive an impression as the curtain goes up, and O'Neill takes advantage of this fact by making his sets immediately do their part in striking the right note as far as the tonal unity of the play is concerned. I will divide this chapter into three divisions of visual imagery: first, masks; second, costumes; and third, the sets of the plays.

Masks, as an aid to the story that is being told, have been in use from the earliest beginnings of the drama. They were first used in primitive religious ceremonies, in war and as objects to ward off disease and death. This use has been dramatic in life processes itself, so it is only natural that the drama would adopt them. The mask is used by the dramatist as a note of emphasis. Its drawback, of course, is its lack of plasticity and variety, but in some plays where the dramatist is concerned with certain dominant emotions, the mask is an effective implement.

O'Neill has felt the need of liberation in all dramatic techniques and he is willing to try anything to "express those profound hidden conflicts." He realizes that the face in its ability to express emotions is the actor's greatest tool, but he also realizes that many shades of meaning are lost in the theatre and that in the use of the mask showing the predominating

passion, the playwright has a much better chance to portray his meanings. This is shown in a note of his:

> "I hold more and more surely to the conviction that the use of masks will be discovered eventually to be the freest solutions of the modern dramatist's problem as to how--with the greatest possible dramatic clarity and economy of means he can express those profound hidden conflicts of the mind which the probings of psychology continue to disclose to us. He must find some method to present this inner drama in his work, or confess himself incapable of portraying one of the most characteristic preoccupations and iniquely significant spiritual impulses of his time."[1]

O'Neill has been the most consistent user of the mask in our modern theatre. In fact, it is an integral part of his technique in many of his plays. In All God's Chillun Got Wings, the negro mask is one of the most significant features of the play. O'Neill borrows the idea for this mask from the Congo, and it is symbolic of the fears, prejudices, and superstitions of the primitive negro.

> "In the left corner, where a window lights it effectively, is a Negro primitive mask from the Congo--a grotesque face, inspiring obscure, dim connotations in one's mind, but beautifully done, conceived in a true religious spirit. In this room, however, the mask acquires an arbitrary accentuation. It dominates by a diabolical quality that contrast imposes upon it."[2]

> "The walls of the room appear shrunken in, the ceiling lowered, so that the furniture, the portrait, the mask look unnaturally large and domineering."[3]

The climax of the play occurs when Ella, now insane, plunges the knife through the Congo Mask.

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1. The American Spectator, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 3.
2. Eugene O'Neill, Nine Plays, p. 112.
3. Ibid., p. 121.

"He (Jim) looks at her dazedly, a fierce rage slowly gathering on his face. She dances away from him. His eyes follow her. His hands clench. She stands in front of the mask--triumphantly. There! What did I tell you? I told you I'd give you the laugh! (She begins to laugh with wild unrestraint, grabs the mask from its place, sets it in the middle of the table and plunging the knife down through it pins it to the table) There! Who's got the laugh now?"

"Ella. (looking up at him with a bewildered cry of terror) Jim! (Her appeal recalls him to himself. He lets his arms slowly drop to his sides, bowing his head. Ella points tremblingly to the mask) It's all right, Jim! It's dead. The devil's dead. See! It couldn't live--unless you passed. If you'd passed it would have lived in you. Then I'd have had to kill you, Jim, don't you see?--or it would have killed me. But now I've killed it. (She pats his hand) So you needn't ever be afraid any more, Jim."[4]

Here the mask is used to impersonate the dark forces of life that make it impossible for Jim and Ella to meet on a common ground of understanding, even though they have love on their side. The old devils of race, prejudice, misunderstanding, fears and persecutions are all centered in this device of the Congo Mask. It is extremely effective, because it suggests the primitive, savage fears in the realistic setting of Harlem.

In The Hairy Ape, O'Neill continues his use of the mask to create the difference between Yank and the crowd on 5th Avenue. John Corbin reviews this effect:

"It began with The Hairy Ape, which echoed the continental fad of stylization and expressionism. So long as the Yank remained in his normal world and in his stoke-hole the world he envisaged was shown in its normal guise; but under the impact of the scorn of him voiced by a beautiful young deck passenger, and of his perverse love for her, her up-town world, took on attitudes absurdly top-loftical and visages of a simpering superiority that could only be rendered by putting the actors into masks. Startling as the effect was, it was sound enough psychologically and perhaps added to the impression of Yank's impassioned delirium. But the fact remained that this partial expressionism rendered impossible any complete and truthful representation of one party to the dramatic struggle. It is perhaps irrelevant to point out

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4. Ibid., p. 131.

> that the great masters have resorted to no such obvious methods in depicting the tortured soul, though the calm citation of Aeschylus gives us a text. But it is not without significance that the device forced O'Neill to depart from the detached impartiality and sturdy truthfulness of his previous plays."[5]

Because of the use of the masks in this play it became a study in psychology rather than a study in character. Yank became a symbol of the deep protest against our modern civilization and the masked faces symbolize the sick machine age.

In The Great God Brown, the mask finds its most complicated expression. Here it is a necessity to the action of the play itself, not an accessory as in All God's Chillun Got Wings. Because of the actors' lack of skill in wearing the masks, the effects were not altogether successful.

> "In The Great God Brown the mask appeared again; but this time it was used to make obvious to the audience the difference between native impulse and the inner, less artificial self which one presents to the world. Each actor carried a rubber false-face expression of his assumed attitude and, as often as O'Neill judged that the audience required to be told that he was socially tarrididdling, clapped it over his visage. Practically, the effect was far less successful than that of the masks in The Hairy Ape. While the actor was speaking, his chin worked up and down against the rubber, with the result that the laps of the mask moved with precisely the expression of a goldfish gaping against its bowl of glass. But that was the least of the damage. No actor needs to be told that the great instruments of his art are his voice and his facial expressions. Those masks reduced the voices behind them to an inarticulate monotany void of tone, color and vibrant force, and all facial expression to a single idiotic grimace."[6]

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5. John Corbin, Saturday Review of Literature, Vol. 8, p. 694.

6. Ibid., Vol. 8, p. 694.

Although, the actual use of the mask in the play was not so successful as in The Hairy Ape, the idea forcing O'Neill to use it was just as sound. The Great God Brown is a bitter criticism of Puritan ideals struggling against Hellenism. It is the story of man's false conceptions of morality and of his unnatural behavior. It seems to me that the mask could be effectively used for this age-old theme. However, even though the use of the mask was criticized when this play was produced on Broadway, the play itself enjoyed a successful run.

From this play of dramatizing the false ideals of Christianity, O'Neill moves on to Lazarus Laughed. Here is not a denial but a complete affirmation of the "good life." The mask is stressed in the opening scene one.

> "(All of these people are masked in accordance with the following scheme: There are seven periods of life shown: Boyhood (or Girlhood), Youth, Young Manhood (or Womanhood), Manhood (or Womanhood), Middle Age, Maturity and Old Age; and each of these periods is represented by seven different masks of general types of character as follows: The Simple, Ignorant; the Happy, Eager; the Self-Reliant; the Servile, Hypocritical; the Revengeful, Cruel; the Sorrowful, Resigned. Thus in each crown (this includes among the men the Seven Guests who are composed of one male of each period-type as period one--type one, period two--type two, and so on up to period seven--type seven.) There are forty-nine different combinations of period and type. Each type has a distinct predominant color for its costumes which varies in kind according to its period. The masks of the Chorus of Old Men are double the size of the others. They are all seven in the Sorrowful, Resigned type of Old Age)."[7]

> "Miriam is a slender, delicate woman of thirty-five, dressed in deep black, who holds one of his (Lazarus) hands in both of hers, and keeps her lips pressed to it. The upper part of her face is covered by a mask which conceals her forehead, eyes and nose, but leaves her mouth revealed. The mask is the pure pallor of marble, the expression that of a statue of Woman, of her eternal acceptance of the compulsion of

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7. Eugene O'Neill, Op. cit. p. 381.

motherhood, the inevitable cycle of love into pain into joy and new love into separation and pain again and the lonliness of age. The eyes of the mask are almost closed. Their gaze turns within, oblivious to the live outside, as they dream down on the child forever in memory at her breast."[8]

"The mouth of Miriam is sensitive and sad, tender with an eager, understanding smile of self-forgetful love, the lips still fresh and young. Her skin, in contrast to the mask, is sunburned and earth-colored like that of Lazarus. Martha, Mary and the two parents all wear full masks which broadly reproduce their own characters."

"All the masks of these Jews of the first two scenes of the play are pronouncedly Semitic."[9]

"As the fight is at its height a Roman Centurion and a squad of eight soldiers come tramping up at the double-quick. They are all masked. These Roman masks now and henceforth in the play are carried out according to the same formula of Seven Periods, Seven Types, as those of the Jews seem previously, except that the basis of each face is Roman--heavy, domineering, self-complacent, the face of a confident dominant race."[10]

"He (Caligula) wears a half-mask of crimson, dark with a purplish tinge, that covers the upper part of his face to below the nose. This mask accentuates his bulging, prematurely wrinkled forehead, his hollow temples and his bulbous, sensual nose. His large troubled eyes, of a glazed greenish-blue, glare out with a shifty feverish suspicion at everyone. Below his mask his own skin is of an anaemic transparent pallor. Above it, his hair is the curly blond hair of a child of six or seven.

"Walking with Caligula is Cneius Crassus, A Roman general--a squat, muscular man of sixty, his mask that of a heavy battered face full of coarse humor."[11]

In Lazarus Laughed, O'Neill employs the mask to indicate a state of mind. Again, he concentrates on the idea rather than on characterization. Only Lazarus is unmasked and this is significant in that Lazarus is the symbol of man freed from all bondage and fear,

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8. Ibid., p. 283.

9. Ibid., p. 383.

10. Ibid., p. 399.

11. Ibid., p. 407.

while all other characters are victims of human passions.

> "His countenance now might well be that of the positive masculine Dionysus, closest to the soil of the Grecian Gods, a Son of Man, born of a mortal. Not the coarse, drunken Dionysus, nor the effeminate God, but Dionysus in his middle period, more comprehensive in his symbolism, the soul of the recurring seasons, of living and dying as processes in eternal growth, of the wine of life stirring forever in the sap and blood and loam of things."[12]

The masks of Lazarus Laughed add to its pageant-like appearance. As a device to set in the audience a state of mind its use is justified. For the group of plays, The Hairy Ape, The Great God Brown, and Lazarus Laughed, O'Neill is essentially interested in the idea back of the play, rather than the development of the characters as themselves. The masks simply serve as a vehicle to transmit his idea over the footlights.

After Lazarus Laughed, O'Neill does not actually put the mask back on the stage; however, he has not lost his belief in it, as he uses the idea in Mourning Becomes Electra. O'Neill uses the motive of strong family resemblance throughout the trilogy.

> "The motive of the resemblance among the three men, Mannon, Orrin and Brant, is a great dramatic image; it provides a parallel to the Greek motive of a cursed house, and at the same time remains modern and fresh."[14]

Also Lavinia comes to look like Christine at the end of the play; thus the curse becomes a thing in common with every member of the family. Lavinia's last appearance is given in this direction:

> "Her body, dressed in deep mourning, again appears flat-chested and thin. The Mannon Mask-semblance of her face appears intensified now."[15]

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12. Ibid., p. 415.

14. Stark Young, The New Republic, Vol. 1, 1931.

15. Eugene O'Neill, op. cit. p. 858.

Thus O'Neill modifies the use of the mask, but throughout the play we feel that he is being strongly influenced by it. O'Neill does not use this device in mere imitation of the Greeks, but he uses it obviously to gain a certain impression that he feels the audience will miss unless he accents the word in this manner. It has not always been successful, but all in all, O'Neill's use of the mask has been original and refreshing.

The second visual device used by O'Neill is costuming. Although this is not one of his most obvious devices it is accurately used in all of his plays. Whenever he needs to portray his thematic mood, he always dresses the object effectively. His costuming is not exaggerated but always represents the mood of the play.

In O'Neill's early one-act plays the costuming is simple and realistic in tone. His one act sea plays are dressed in sailor bows and knots. This is authentically done, as O'Neill sailed the seas. Beyond the Horizon, Anna Christie, Diff'rent, and Welded are costumed realistically. These plays do not offer a problem to the costumer as they are simply but appropriately done.

However, in The Emperor Jones, O'Neill has worked out a more ambitious plan of costuming. In the first scene Jones has on the trappings of royalty, but as the play progresses he loses piece by piece the trappings of civilization, until at the end he is reduced to a mere breech-cloth. What could tell the audience more clearly the effects of fear on this primitive negro soul? It is not by accident that Jones loses his clothes of royalty; necessity forces him to leave bit by bit everything he has built up around him until we see finally only the naked fear-crazed negro.

In The Hairy Ape, O'Neill uses costumes to contrast the ape with a so-called superior civilization. Yank is dressed to suggest the ape and the crowd on Fifth Avenue are over-dressed in the latest mode of the day. Definitely, O'Neill uses the costume here to suggest the class differences and antagonisms that the mood of the play brings out. In the opening scenes Yank is seen as a stoker on board a ship with a bare, hairy chest and Mildred, the epitome of our civilization, is dressed in the latest mode of the day. What a nice contrast!

In Desire Under the Elms, the stern puritanism of the piece is suggested in the clothing. Abbie wears the tight-laced bodice dress of black. The color and the style show the repression and effects of bad conscience on these human beings, for after all, the play shows us that they are very human after all. Abbie for all her black dress and repressed manner becomes a victim of her love for Eben. The costumes definitely aid O'Neill in establishing the mood of this play and help the audience to sense something of the hidden thoughts and passion that uproot this rock-ribbed new England family.

In Lazarus Laughed, O'Neill's imagination carries him to great heights and his costuming is very appropriate for the tonal intensity he is driving for. The classic Greek flowing type of dress is used for Lazarus and his followers,--while the Romans are dressed in the regalia of the Roman Centurians. Again, O'Neill uses the principle of contrast to aid him in his portrayal of mood.

In this play, O'Neill uses more color than in any of his other plays. The eye is feasted with vivid blues, bright reds and yellows. O'Neill's imagination is shown in the detail in which he worked out the problem of costuming in this elaborate dance-pageant. The difference between the idea of Hellenism and of Hebraism is partially told by the costumes in this beautiful dream-drama.

In Mourning Becomes Electra we have the puritan theme again. The clothes suggest repression, a repression that the Mannon family cannot overcome and which finally becomes their curse--their bad conscience. Finally it becomes such an overwhelming reality that the black raiment of mourning is becoming to Electra. Undoubtedly O'Neill had this pictorial idea of the situation when he gave his trilogy the name of Mourning Becomes Electra. It is fitting and proper that the last Mannon (Lavinia) should fit herself into the habiliments of tragedy.

So again O'Neill uses another device to convey the tonal mood of his play. He does not neglect anything if it is for the eye or ear, but blends all devices into his scheme of unity that fuses his ideas into a single mood.

The third visual device O'Neill uses to further his unity of impressionism is the most important of the group--the stage setting. Settings become a real problem to O'Neill as he realizes the necessity of fitting the picture of the set to the mood of the play, as a means to a strengthening element for its tonal unity. Every play appeals primarily to the sense of hearing, but aided and

intensified by visual imagery."[16] In every play O'Neill has considered the setting as an active agent in helping him create that tonal atmosphere which envelopes most of his plays.

> "O'Neill is a master in creating an emotional atmosphere. Sometimes this atmosphere is achieved without departure from the actual. O'Neill's plays gain in effectiveness by this adherence to a surface truth, but they just as surely gain by their departure from it. It is almost as if to O'Neill the external and the internal - the body and spirit - were not two things, but one. Such a harmonious welding of available means for the accomplishment of an end, is surely the aim of the new movement, expressionism in the theatre."[17]

First, I shall point out the plays with simple, realistic sets which help portray the hidden truth beneath the surface. In many of his plays O'Neill is the stern realist, and this is particularly noticeable in his backgrounds. In his early one-act plays, realistic, atmospheric settings intrigue him to the exclusion of everything else. Thirst is played on a raft, mid-ocean. Another one of this group interesting enough to comment on is Fog. The setting calls for a heavy fog and this device of setting is indicative of a state of mind and is used again in Anna Christie wherein the use is both realistic and symbolistic. In practically all of these early one-act plays the realism of sea-life is predominant in the settings. In Bound East for Cardiff the scene is the seaman's forecastle of a British tramp steamer, Glencairn. The Glencairn one-acts are essentially realistic sea pictures. When this play was first produced at Provincetown with George Cram (Jig) Cook as Yank, the setting was truly realistic. As Susan Glaspell writes:

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16. Sophus Keith Winther, Eugene O'Neill, p. 247.

17. Grace Anschutz, The Drama, April, 1926, p. 279, 280 - Expressionistic Drama in the American Theatre.

> "I may see it through memories too emotional, but it seems to me I have never sat before a more moving production than our Bound East for Cardiff . . . . Jig (Cook) was Yank." The night of the opening there was a fog in the harbour, just as it is described in the script. "The tide was in, and it washed under us and around, spraying through the holes in the floor."[18]

O'Neill gives us an interesting note on The Moon of the Carribees:

> "In The Moon, posed against a background of that beauty, sad because it is eternal, which is one of the revealing moods of the sea's truth, his silhouetted gestures of self-pity are reduced to their proper insignificance, his thin whine of weakness is lost in the silence which it was mean enough to disturb, we get the perspective to judge him--and the others--and we find his sentimental posing much more out of harmony with truth, much less in tune with beauty, than the honest vulgarity of his mates."[19]

The set of Beyond the Horizon is suggested by the title of the play. The horizon is seen by the eye and the mind knows that the ever present horizon is the prison that holds Robert prisoner to the farm and suggests his limitations in not being free to follow his dreams. In his last speech Robert refers to the horizon:

> "(He raises himself on his elbow, his face radiant and points to the horizon.) Look! Isn't it beautiful beyond the hills? I can hear the old voices calling me to come. (Exultantly) And this time I'M going! It isn't the end. It's a free beginning - the start of my voyage! I've won my trip - the right of release - beyond the horizon."[20]

In Emperor Jones the setting is interesting. The first scene is a room in the Palace, and the only furniture is a huge chair

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18. Barrett H. Clark, Eugene O'Neill, p. 84.

19. Ibid., pp. 82, 83 (Italics are mine)

20. C. H. Whitman, Contemporary Plays, p. 528.

which Jones uses as a throne. In this scene we see him with all the assumed trappings of royalty. This scene lasts for only a small part of the play. In the second scene The Great Forest begins and before the play is over we plunge deeper and deeper into this dark forest of despair that finally overwhelms Jones. Cleon Throckmortan designed this set for Emperor Jones.

In Anna Christie, O'Neill returns to the "old devil sea". Again we have sea, ships, sailors. The fog is used here to suggest the cleansing, regenerating agent. In the movie, in which Greta Garbo was starred in the title role, the fog was used realistically.

In the Hairy Ape the entire setting is realistic and symbolic. It begins in the hold of the steamer where "Yank" seems to belong - then the Fifth Avenue set, where he distinctly does not belong and finally the cycle is completed when he returns to the zoo. Cleon Throckmortan also designed the set for this unusual play.

In Desire Under the Elms the farm plays an important part in the action. From the first line of the play, throughout the entire action, greed for the land is apparent. This is suggested in the setting. Even in the final speech of the play this is apparent.

> "Sheriff. (looking around at the farm enviously--to his companion) It's a jim-dandy farm, no denyin'. Wished I owned it!"[21]

Besides the farm, the set of the house is unusual. The Interiors of the two bedrooms on the top floor are shown.

> "About eight in the evening. The interior of the two bedrooms on the top floor is shown. Eben is sitting on the side of his bed in the room on the left. On account of the heat he has taken off everything but his undershirt and pants. His feet are bare. He faces front, brooding moodily, his chin propped on his hands, a desperate expression on his face.

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21. Eugene O'Neill, Op. cit., p. 206.

"Abbie. (indifferently) Mebbe. (In the next room Eben gets up and paces up and down distractedly. Abbie hears him. Her eyes fasten on the intervening wall with concentrated attention. Eben stops; consciously he stretches out his arms for her and she half rises. Then aware, he mutters a curse at himself and flings himself face downward on the bed, his clenched fists above his head, his face buried in the pillow. Abbie relaxes with a faint sigh but her eyes remain fixed on the wall; she listens with all her attention for some movement from Eben)."[22]

We see the stern, inhibited, puritanical atmosphere of the New England farm--the play is made tragic by the inexorable laws that transcend even this atmosphere. Robert Edmond Jones designed this revolutionary set.

In The Fountain, O'Neill conceives a play in a poetic mood. The set is designed with romantic beauty. The Fountain is in the center of the stage and is a symbol of eternal youth and life. It is expressive of the poem O'Neill uses over and over in the play.

"Love is a flower
Forever blooming
Life is a fountain
Forever leaping
Upward to catch the golden sunlight,
Striving to reach the azure heaven;
Falling, falling,
Ever returning
To kiss the earth that the flower may live."[23]

Marco Millions is a glorified pagent, a veritable feast for the eyes. "O'Neill in the first act of Marco Millions passes in review the architectural facades of five separate civilizations during thirty minutes of playing time."[24]

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22. Ibid., pp. 170, 171.

23. Eugene O'Neill, The Stage is Set, p. 111.

24. Ibid., p. 38.

It is an extravaganza that should be played on a revolving stage because of the many complicated settings required. Robert Edmond Jones was the artist that gave the Theatre Guild the elaborate Oriental setting. The setting, as O'Neill describes it, is much too complicated for the ordinary stage.

> "Marco Millions is of course a scene-designer's holiday and nowhere more so than in its opening scenes before a mosque, A Buddhist temple, and the Great Wall of China. In each of these O'Neill calls for the figures of a ruler, a priest, a soldier, in a semi-circle consisting of a mother nursing a baby, two children playing, a young couple in loving embrace, a middle-aged couple, an old couple, and a coffin."[25]

The prologue is played before a sacred tree on a vast plain in Persia near the confines of India.

The next scene is the exterior of Donata's home on a canal Venice.

The next scene, is the interior of the Papal Legate Palace at Acres.

Scene Three - The front of a Mohammedan masque.

Scene Four - The front of a Buddhist Temple.

Scene Five - A section of the Great Wall of China with an enormous shut gate.

Scene Six - The grand throne room in the Palace of Kublai, the Great Khan, in the City of Cambaluc, Cathay.

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25. Ibid., p. 116.

"The scene is revealed as the Grand Throne Room in the palace of Kublai, the Great Kaan, in the city of Cambaluc, Cathay--an immense octagonal room, the lofty walls adorned in gold and silver. In the far rear wall, within a deep recess like the shrine of an idol, is the throne of the Great Kaan. It rises in three tiers, three steps to a tier. On golden cushions at the top Kublai sits dressed in his heavy gold robes of state."[26]

Lazarus Laughed has never been attempted professionally because of its difficulty to produce. Gilmore Brown produced it at the Pasadena Community Playhouse. Ralph Adams writes of this performance.

"Brown accomplished things that the arty magazines have talked about for years, but which I have never seen successfully done before. I mean in the grouping and moving of his crowds, the opposition of group and group in mass and rhythmic movement, with individual figures working against them like sharp bits of detail against a textured fabric. He used two levels, one about seven feet above the other, arranged in blocks, with steps this way and that, pylons, screens and decorative accessories, differently set and lit for the different episodes....out of me....Pichel (who played Lazarus) was amazing...But the play seemed verbose: the thing was too damned long."[27]

This play is indicative of a modern trend in art.

"But the single characteristic common to almost every play of the nineteenth century that we now classify as modern is the tendency to attack the sacrosanct traditions of its generation, its stereotyped notions of heroism, patriotism, honour, love, and duty--in general, its accepted concepts of right and wrong. How little this tendency has to do with realism or the shape of the proscenium arch is proved by the fact that it persists in such poetic fantasies as Lazarus Laughed and Paul Among the Jews. O'Neill revives Lazarus in order to proclaim a conception of immortality that has no connection with Christian doctrine."[28]

"It was also called an elaborate pageant with music as the predominant note."[29]

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26. Eugene O'Neill, Op. cit., p. 241.

27. Clark, Op. cit., p. 182.

28. Lee Simonson, Op., cit., p. 88.

29. Barrett Clark, Op., cit, p. 183.

If the movies could take this imaginative play and produce it artistically, since the legitimate stage cannot handle it, Hollywood would justify its existence in the eyes of the artistic world.

Dynamo has a symbolic setting. O'Neill was inspired to do it in this way. Kenneth MacQuowan described its origin.

> "One day a few years ago O'Neill stood watching a dynamo at a plant near Ridgefield, Connecticut, where electricity is generated from the waters of New England rivers. There was something in the machine that suggested a new god, just as the stone images of the past symbolized the old gods. The great hydro-electric generator in the play "is huge and black, with something of a great massive ebony idol about it, the 'exciter' set on the main structure like a round head with oblong eyes above the squat torso."[30]

Robert Edmond Jones with the designer of this striking set.[31]

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30. Ibid., p. 188.

31. Lee Simonson, Op. cit., pp. 459, 460, 461.

> "A designer is more truly creative when he fails with the poet, as I did with O'Neill in Dynamo, than when he succeeds with the playwright who is nothing more than an observer. I have never shared more directly the excitement, the adventure, and the power of the modern theatre than in following the trail of O'Neill's mind from a power-house on a Connecticut river to the play that it inspired. When I first read the script, how incredible the singing, crooning dynamo seemed, how strained the effort to apostrophize it as a god whose commands could be interpreted! I visited the power-house. I heard the swish of water in the sluice below, a rushing accompaniment to the one dynamo that happened to be running at so many hundred revolutions per minute. It had a distinct musical note. I noticed that the recording dial was not working. "How can you keep track of it?" I asked the superintendent. "Oh, I know by the sound," he replied. Here was a technician, like a violinist tuning his instrument, relying on his sense of musical pitch to control a machine whose fluctuations had to be mathematically exact. I passed the transformers where the lazy current of a river had been transmuted into an electric current of thirty thousand volts. The heat generated by the change was so great that water could no longer cool the transformer; it had to be jacketed in cylinders of the heaviest oil. I passed a

The set is startling to say the least and seems to be a distinct

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switch-board where tiny red and green lights blinked and winked, signalling changes of load that released enough energy to turn the wheels of entire factories or to light a small city. I stood in front of the condensers on an upper story where the thirty thousand volts of current were fed to the main transmission-line. I was warned to keep ten feet back of a protecting rail. The electric energy streaming through a copper wire at this point was so great that a static spark might jump across the gap and burn me severely. No insulation invented could protect me from those copper wires. If I touched one I would flame like a match and be consumed in an instant to my very bones. I noticed that the porcelain insulators had much the same form as certain ceremonial vases in Chinese temples. I listened to accounts of the terror of one thunderstorm when lightning struck a power-line miles away and the immense flow of current, short-circuited, shot back, and burned out one dynamo as if its windings had been so much paper.

"Here was water that became fire, energy that sang a monotonous tune, that did croon like a lullaby and then became incandescent light. Here was power that could give man the strength of a god able to move mountains, the source of blind energy that could execute his commands over a network of metallic nerves beyond the reach of his eyes, that could light his way through darkness, reclaim him from toil, and, if not propitiated, consume him with flame. As I left a commonplace bare brick and steel power-house, I was touched with a terror and a veneration for the invisible forces controlling modern life that are potentially its salvation and its destruction, its heaven and its hell. I have left many cathedrals less awed and humbled. I had been at a shrine where an invisible miracle was daily performed, a trans-substantiation no less miraculous than that of the Mass. And the purely mathematical calculation of engineers had given porcelain insulators the same beauty of form that ancient artists had given to temple vessels.

"Rereading O'Neill's script, I seemed to understand for the first time the myth of Prometheus the fire-bringer. I understood why primitive peoples had cringed in terror before thunderbolts and elected altars to invisible gods. I had experienced, through a poet's insight, the wonder, the humility and pride, the hunger for power, the ecstasy of calling it forth, in which religions are born.

"I do not for a moment pretend that I succeeded in putting any of

product of the machine age.

In Mourning Becomes Electra, O'Neill solves his most difficult problem of setting. His own note concerning this problem shows the thorough manner in which he plies his trade. "Must get more distances and perspective--more sense of fate." O'Neill through his scenic proportion gives this sense of fate that overhangs the trilogy. The audience first views the gates, then the yard and walks, then the porticos and finally the great house of Mannon itself to be entered cautiously. Who would enter into this forbidding house any other way.

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this into my setting. The play itself failed at its climax when O'Neill's dynamo became an archaic god that could exact nothing more than an almost pathological desire for sexual purity. The theme of the play was short-circuited before it reached expression. Nevertheless I continue to hope that the play will be rewritten and that the projected trilogy of which it was to be a part will be completed. I continue to feel that in Dynamo O'Neill touched the sources of modern faith and despair more nearly than in exploring so much more successfully the insatiable desires of one modern woman for satisfaction in sex or in tracing the meaning of fate and retribution through the forbidden passions of one New England family. For Dynamo, despite its failure in performance, was more nearly the kind of success that the theatre needs today than hundreds of its present successes. In setting Dynamo, in sharing a poet's intuition, in accepting his symbols, in attempting to make the commonplace mechanical shapes of our industrial environment significant of the forces for good and evil that they released, in building them into a rostrum on which the hope and despair of our effort today to dominate ourselves and the world about us could be voiced--I understood how the designing of a stage setting could be made a creative act, whether or not I myself could make it one."

O'Neill continues in his notes:

> "Pattern of exterior and interior scenes, beginning and ending with exterior in each play--with one ship scene at the center of the second play (this, center of whole work) emphasizing sea background of family and symbolic motive of sea as means of escape and release.
>
> "Develop South sea Island motive--its appeal for them all (in various aspects)--release, peace, security, beauty, freedom of conscience, sinlessness, etc. longing for the primitive--and mothes symbol--yearning for prenatal non-competitive freedom from fear--make this island theme re-current motive."[32]

O'Neill realizes the value of repetiton in art and also in alternation. He achieves variety in a striking and forceful way in this alternation of interior and exterior scenes. The first time he uses this device is in Beyond the Horizon, and carries the idea through Mourning Becomes Electra. Jo Mielziner gave O'Neill the execution of his ideas for background that were so satisfying to the eye. Note the classical idea in the lines: "It is a large building of the Greek temple type..... A white wooden portico with six tall columns." Although O'Neill was conscious of the Greek influence in writing Mourning Becomes Electra, he also realized that tragedy is universal. "Yet the principles of the drama are eternal; the emotions of men throughout the world differ only in detail or stress, not in essentials."[33]

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32. Sophus Keith Winther, Op., cit. p. 265.

33. Bonamy Dobree, The Southern Review, 1937.

O'Neill realizes from his apprentice one acts that his settings strike the right atmospheric note at once for the subject matter that follows. He spares no detail, whether it be realistic or symbolistic to catch that impressionism that is such a factor in his plays. After seeing Anna Christie we can almost feel the fog whenever we think of the play. The Fountain will always bring to mind the visual loveliness of its external form. Emperor Jones remind us of the forest of despair. Desire Under the Elms brings to mind that stern puritanical background with all its inhibition that was unable to restrain the human fires it housed. The Oriental lavishness of Marco Millions is a scenic artist's paradise. The impossibility of achieving the pictures in Lazarus Laughed is a challenge to the future and Mourning Becomes Electra is a triumphant blending of repressed New England and classic Greek. In Days Without End, the cross is used symbolically on the stage.

Through these varied and highly significant uses of settings, undoubtedly O'Neill realizes that what the eye sees enhances the dramatic value of his script. He uses every possible technique to entice the eye toward that final effect that he is after. Whatever ideas are back of his play, he obviously goes after scenic devices that can be utilized to help paint the pictures he conjures.

Chapter Four: Sounds 1

After O'Neill sees the appropriate pantomimic structure of a play, and after he gives each play the setting that mounts it in its own tonal color, he comes to the problem of further accentuating his mood with sound. After all, the lines of the play are the most telling element and O'Neill regards sound, including diction, as perhaps his most subtle device in achieving his artistic interpretations of our own age. For O'Neill always attempts to portray the age, either in its sickness, as in Dynamo, Welded, and Marco Millions, or in its glorious affirmation of living as in The Fountain, Lazarus Laughed, and Days Without End. He completes his technique by the use of sound devices, first; in the form of music; second: Unusual sounds; third: diction.

The blending of diction and music into the chorus is the first device of sound to be considered. In Lazarus Laughed, the chorus provides a beautiful background for the "Voice of Lazarus ringing through the air like a command from the sky", saying "There is no death!" [1] The chorus carries the meaning and beauty of the play as:

> "Men call life death and fear it.
> They hide from it in horror.
> Their lives are spent in hiding
> Their fear becomes their living.
> They worship life as death!" [2]

Lazarus says, "Man must learn to live by laughter!" and the chorus adds meaning and emphasis by singing:

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1. Eugene O'Neill, Nine Plays, p. 413.

2. Ibid., p. 418.

Laugh! Laugh!
There is only life!
There is only laughter!
Fear is no more!
Death is dead!" [3]

In this play O'Neill uses the Greek chorus to give a background of Dionyseas philosophy. It adds to the pageant-like movement of the play and is a distinct aid in achieving that joyousness of mood that the title suggests.

The chorus of Mourning Becomes Electra is used in a more modified form, but it is a definite part of the somber picture of the Mannon story. The chorus is made up of townspeople who tell the necessary facts to lay the background of the modern Agamemnon story. O'Neill uses the chorus to introduce the note of impending danger foreshadowing the disaster that is bound to follow.

The sound of music and chants is an ever present device in O'Neill's plays to assist that intensity of impressionism of his creations. The drums in Moon of The Carribbees are used to suggest the inevitability and insistence of the sex urge. The plot is an incongruous situation against a beautiful background intensified by this never ending beat and throb of the drum. The rhythm is first sensed when the curtain rises and this direction is given. "A melancholy negro chant, faint and far off, drifts, crooning, over the water." [4] The music continues with:

"(He sings) As I was a-roamin' down Paradise Street-----
All. Wa-a-ay, blow the man down!
Driscoll. As I was a-roamin' down Paradise Street----
All. Give us some time to blow the man down!

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3. Ibid., p. 418.

4. Eugene O'Neill, The Great God Brown, p. 199.

Chorus
Blow the man down, boys, oh, blow the man down!
Wa-a-ay, blow the man down!
As I was a-roamin' down Paradise Street--
Give us some time to blow the man down!

Driscoll. A pretty young maiden I chanced for to meet.
All. Wa-a-ay, blow the man down!
Driscoll. A pretty young maiden I chanced for to meet.
All. Give us some time to blow the man down!

Chorus
Blow the man down, boys, oh, blow the man down!
Wa-a-ay, blow the man down!
A pretty young maiden I chanced for to meet.
Give us some time to blow the man down!"[5]

A little later this direction, "The mournful cadence of the song from the shore can again be faintly heard." Swifty says, "Damn that song of theirs". Yes, he damns it, but it is too strong for him and he gives in just as the other members of the crew do. The rhythm and singing become more intense until after the dancing scene; then they finally die down until we have this direction at the end of this play,

> "There is silence for a second or so, broken only by the haunted, saddened voice of that brooding music, faint and far-off, like the mood of the moonlight made audible."[6]

In All God's Chillun Got Wings, singing is used to intensify the feeling. The song of the tenor in Act I, Scene IV, tells this tragic story of racial maladjustment.

> "From the street of the blacks to the right a Negro tenor sings in a voice of shadowy richness--the first stanza with a contented, child-like melancholy--
>
> Sometimes I feel like a mourning dove,
> Sometimes I feel like a mourning dove,
> Sometimes I feel like a mourning dove,
> I feel like a mourning dove
> Feel like a mourning dove.
>
> The second with a dreamy, boyish exultance--
>
> Sometimes I feel like an eagle in the air,

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5. Ibid., p. 202.

6. Ibid., p. 220.

Sometimes I feel like an eagle in the air,
Sometimes I feel like an eagle in the air,
I feel like an eagle in the air.
Feel like an eagle in the air.

The third with a brooding, earthbound sorrow—

Sometimes I wish that I'd never been born,
Sometimes I wish that I'd never been born,
Sometimes I wish that I'd never been born,
I wish that I'd never been born.
Wish that I'd never been born." [7]

O'Neill realizes that human emotions can be suggested by music more readily than by using the spoken word, and many times he precedes the spoken line by a fitting song to pave the way, emotionally, for what is to follow.

In The Fountain the song and Love is the theme that pervades the entire action, reaching its climax in the final scene.

"Juan. (opening his eyes and looking after them, a tender smile on his lips) Yes! Go where Beauty is! Sing! (From outside the voices of Beatriz and his Nephew are heard mingling in their version of the fountain song)

Love is a flower
Forever blooming
Beauty a fountain
Forever flowing
Upward into the source of sunshine,
Upward into the azure heaven;
One with God but
Ever returning
To kiss the earth that the flower may live.

(Juan listens in an ecstasy, bows his head, weeps. Then he sinks back with closed eyes exhaustedly. Luis enters from the monastery)

Luis. (Hurries forward in alarm) Juan! (He hears the song and is indignant) Have they lost all feeling? I will soon stop——(He starts for the door in rear)

Juan. (in a ringing voice) No! I am that song! One must accept, absorb, give back, become oneself a symbol! Juan Ponce de Leon is past!

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7. Ibid. pp. 109-110.

He is resolved into the thousand moods of beauty that make up happiness--color of the sunset, of tomorrow's dawn, breath of the great Trade wind--sunlight on grass, an insect's song, the rustle of leaves, an ant's ambitions. (In an ecstasy) Oh, Luis, I begin to know eternal youth! I have found my Fountain! O Fountain of Eternity, take back this drop, my soul! (He dies. Luis bows his head and weeps)

Father Superior. (enters from the right) Vespers. (Then in a voice of awe as he stares at Juan) Is he--dead?

Luis. (Aroused--exaltedly) No! He lives in God! Let us pray. (Luis sinks on his knees beside Juan's body, the Father Superior beside him. He lifts his eyes and clasped hands to heaven and prays fervently. The voices of Beatriz and the Nephew in the fountain song seem to rise to an exultant pitch. Then the chant of the monks swells out, deep and vibrant. For a moment the two strains blend into harmony, fill the air in an all-comprehending hymn of the mystery of life as

The Curtain Falls(" [8]

Here the melody helps the theme of immortality in nature and the music gives the play inspiration and beauty.

In Mourning Becomes Electra O'Neill gives us an interesting note on the music he uses in the play.

"The chanty 'Shenandoah'--use this more--as a sort of theme song--its simple sad rhythm of hopeless sea longing peculiarly significant--even the stupid words have striking meaning when considered in relation to tragic events in play" [9]

Here O'Neill uses the music and the singing to suggest that desire that the Mannons felt for release. If only they could escape their fate. O'Neill uses this song in connection with the recurring theme of escape to the South Sea Islands. If only the clipper ship could carry them away to release, security, freedom from conscience all would be well, but alas their background compels this and the song gives an added note of futile desire to this tragic story. This wraith of a song appears again and again throughout this sombre tale of inhibited New England.

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8. Ibid., pp 191, 192.

9. Winther, Sophus Keith, Eugene O'Neill, p. 266

"Oh, Shenandoah, I long to hear you
Away, my rolling river.
Oh, Shenandoah, I can't get near you
Way-ay, I'm bound away
Across the wide Missouri.

"Oh, Shenandoah, I love your daughter
A-way, my rolling river." [10]

We all seek release through music and the Mannons were human after all, caught in webs and entanglements that were beyond human solving.

In almost every play O'Neill has written, music is introduced. He realizes the power of music to soothe, excite and suggest. He employs music fearlessly to add to the impressionism that he is trying to create. O'Neill obviously uses a certain kind of music for each effect, as each time he uses it, it is in character. O'Neill uses other ingenious sounds to achieve his tonal intensity. They are novel, sometimes realistic, sometimes symbolistic. As the drums were used to suggest sex in The Moon , O'Neill uses them for another purpose in Emperor Jones. Here their constant throbbing is to suggest fear. In the beginning of the play the sound is barely audible but as the action progresses and the forest closes in on the Emperor, the drums become louder and more insistent until all forces unite in overwhelming him. The drums add intensity, and their rhythm helps weave the net of fear that finally ensnares Jones. The murmur and splashing of the water in the fountain used in the setting of The Fountain suggests the ever running stream of life--forever recurring in beauty and rhythm. The Bell in Desire Under the Elms is not only an excellent device to open the play with, but also signifies the call to love amid the New England setting. The sound of the bell released the rock-ribbed characters that had been trained through generations to smother their genuine passions.

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10. Eugene O'Neill, Op. cit. p. 727.

This note demonstrates what part sound devices had in his conception of that modern fable Dynamo.

"Sounds and off-stage effects can be as integrally related to drama. The Hairy Ape must be lighted by the glow of his particular hell in a steamer's stokehold, and the rhythmic crunch of coal is as essential an accompaniment to his diatribes as the chant of any chorus. Shortly before Dynamo went into rehearsal, the following memorandum was received from O'Neill:

The stage effects in Part One and Part Three (the thunder and lightning in Part One, and the sound of the water flowing over the near-by dam and the hum of the generator in Part Two):

"I cannot stress too emphatically the importance of starting early in rehearsals to get these effects exactly right. It must be realized that these are not incidental noises but significant dramatic overtones that are an integral part of that composition in the theatre which is the whole play. If they are dismissed until the last dress rehearsals (the usual procedure in my experience), then the result must inevitably be an old melodrama thunderstorm, and a generator sounding obviously like a vacuum cleaner; not only will the true values of these effects be lost but they will make the play look foolish.

"I may seem to be a bug on the subject of sound in the theatre--but I have reason. J-----once said that the difference between my plays and other contemporary work was that I always wrote primarily by ear for the ear, that most of my plays, even down to the rhythm of the dialogue, had the definite structural quality of a musical composition. This hits the nail on the head. It is not that I consciously strive after this but that, willy nilly, my stuff takes that form. (Whether this is a transgression or not is a matter of opinion. Certainly I believe it to be a great virtue, although it is the principal reason why I have been blamed for useless repetitions, which to me were significant recurrences of theme.) But the point here is that I have always used sound in plays as a structural part of them. Tried to use, I mean--for I've never got what the script called for (even in "Jones"), not because what I specified couldn't be done but because I was never able to overcome the slip-shod, old-fashioned disregard of our modern theatre for what ought to be one of its superior opportunities (contrasted with the medium of the novel, for example) in expressing the essential rhythm of our lives today. This sounds complicated but to illustrate: This is a machine age which one would like to express as a background for lives in plays in overtones of characteristic, impelling and governing mechanical sound and rhythm--but how can one, unless a corresponding mechanical perfection in the theatre is a reliable string of the instrument (the theatre as a whole) on which one composes? The only answer is, it cannot be done. Looking back on my plays in which significant mechanical sound and not music is called for (nearly all of the best ones) I can say that none of them has ever really been thoroughly done in the modern theatre although they were written for it. Some day I hope they will be--and people are due to be surprised by the added dramatic

value--modern values--they will take on.

"After which dissertation (which has little or nothing to do with "Interlude" or "Marco" but a hell of a lot to do with "Dynamo"), I would suggest that some special person with the right mechanical flair be sicced on this aspect of "Dynamo" to get perfect results. It can't be done in two or three days. What is needed is lightning that will suddenly light up people's faces in different parts of the set, keep them in the general picture--not literal lightning, but a reproduction of the dramatic effect of lightning on people's faces. And thunder with a menacing, brooding quality as if some Electrical God were on the hills impelling all these people, effecting their thoughts and actions. The queer noise of a generator, which is unlike any other mechanical noise (it is described in the script), its merging with, and contrast with, the peaceful, soft Nature sound of the falls, also needs some doing. The startling, strained, unnatural effect of the human voice raised to try and dominate the generator's hum (in the scenes in the generator room), is also important and part of my conception. All this can be done--and easily--if the person on this job will get a little expert information from the General Electric and go out to the plant at Stevenson, Conn., I visited, and look around and listen in. My scenic scheme is a concentration of the features of this plant.------" [11]

In this play the sound devices are of primary importance; they become part of the dramatis personae, giving meaning and truth to the whole.

The recurring cough in Beyond the Horizon suggests futility. Robert never escapes beyond the horizon, and that incessant, hacking cough tells the audience of the hopelessness of his longings and the weakness of mere man in the face of circumstances. This note is barely noticeable at first but becomes louder and more insistent until Robert dies and finally escapes the awful limitations of our finite setting, also the gasping cough in Bound East for Cardiff intensifies the impressionism of the play. O'Neill uses the dying gasp of Yank to add to the realism and intensity of the mood. He is choked by cruelty and when "the fog lifts" he is bound east for Cardiff.

With drums, bells, the whining of a black dynamo, coughs, tittering, laughing, chants, and many forms of music, O'Neill gains that intensity of

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11. Lee Simonson, The Stage is Set, pp., 117, 118, 119.

emotion that each play has. O'Neill realizes that all the arts can serve him and he unhesitatingly calls upon Calliope and Terpsichore to aid him in presenting all the picture, not just a fragment of the whole.

We come now to the most important part of O'Neill's plays--the words themselves. What does he have to say? O'Neill has a vast problem in diction as his plays touch upon almost every phase of human life. He gives us the coarse, crude speech of the Glencairn series, the colloquial sounds of Ah! Wilderness, and the refined, restrained speech of the Mannons.

O'Neill uses realistic speech whenever possible. He knows that realistic diction adds sincerity to the piece. In all his apprentice group the diction is entirely realistic, subtly blended with symbolism as in The Fog, Thirst, The Rope, Beyond the Horizon. His lines in his sea plays are authentic and sea-tanged. O'Neill lived a sailor's life for years and he knew their jargon.

The diction is fitting in Beyond the Horizon as the line proclaim Robert to be the dreamer and Andrew the practical son of the Soil. These lines are typical:

> Andrew(seeing Robert has not noticed his presence--in a loud shout). Hey there'. (Robert turns with a start. Seeing who it is, he smiles.) Gosh, you do take the prize for daydreaming! And I see you've toted one of the old books along with you. (He crosses the ditch and sits on the fence near his brother.) What is it this time--poetry, I'll bet. (He reaches for the book.) Let me see.
>
> Robert (handing it to him rather reluctantly). Look out you don't get it full of dirt.
>
> Andres (glancing at his hands). That isn't dirt--its good clean earth. (He turns over the pages. His eyes read something and he gives an exclamation of disgust.) Hump'. (With a provoking grin at his brother he reads aloud in a doleful, sing-song voice.) "I have loved wind and light and the bright sea. But holy and most sacred night, not as I love and have loved thee. (He hands the book back." Here! Take it and bury it. I suppose it's that year in college gave you a liking for that kind of stuff. I'm darn glad I stopped at High School, or maybe I'd been crazy too. (He grins and slaps Robert on the back affectionately.) Imagine me reading poetry and plowing at the same time! The team'd run away,I'll bet. Robert.(laughing). Or picture me plowing.)"[12]

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12. Whitman, Seven Contemporary Plays, p. 452.

In the negro group, The Dreamy Kid, All God's Chillun Got Wings, and Emperor Jones, O'Neill's negro diction is accurate and adequate. He makes it realistic and true. This negro dialect from All God's Chillun Got Wings shows O'Neill's understanding of their speech.

"Joe. Listen to me, nigger: I got a heap to whisper in yo' ear! Who is you, anyhow? Who does you think you is? Don't you' old man and mine work on de docks togidder befo' yo' old man gits his own truckin' business? Yo' ol' man swallers his nickels, my ol' man buys him beer wid dem and swallers dat--dat's the on'y diff'rence. Don't you'n' me drag up togidder?

Jim. I'M your friend, Joe.

Joe. No, you isn't! I ain't no fren o' yourn! I don't even know who you is! What's all dis schoolin' you doin'? What's all dis dressin' up and graduatin' an' sayin' you gwine study be a lawyer? What's all dis fakin' an' pretendin' and swellin' out grand an' talkin' soft and perlite? What's all dis denyin' you's a nigger--en' wid de white boys listenin' to you say it! Is you aimin' to buy white wid yo' ol' man's dough like Mickey say? What is you? You don't talk? Den I takes it out o' yo' hide! Tell me befo' I wrecks yo' face in! Is you a nigger or isn't you? Is you a nigger, Nigger? Nigger, is you a nigger?" [13]

In Desire we find the short clipped speech of the New Englander. No time wasted on long romantic speeches, but every speech full of meaning. Even the impassioned love scenes between Abbie and Eben are short, tense but dynamic in their intent. O'Neill's use of New England dialect undoubtedly gives the right effect here.

Cabot. Ye been prayin', Abbie?--fur a son?--t'us?
Abbie. Ay-eh. I want a son now.
Cabot. It'd be the blessin' o' God, Abbie--the blessin' o' God Almighty on me--in my old age--in my lonesomeless! They hain't nothin' I wouldn't do fur ye then, Abbie. Ye'd hev on'y t' ask it--anythin' ye'd a mind t'!
Abbie. Would ye will the farm t' me then--t' me an' it...?
Cabot. I'd do anythin' ye axed, I tell ye! I swar it! May I be everlastin' damned t' hell if I wouldn't! Pray t' the Lord agen, Abbie. It's the Sabbath! I'll jine ye! Two prayers air better nor one. "An' God hearkened unto Rachel"! An' God hearkened unto Abbie! Pray, Abbie! Pray fur him to hearken!" [14]

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13. Eugene O'Neill, Nine Plays, p. 101.

14. Ibid., p. 170

Ah! Wilderness is a study in the colloqualisms of Connecticut in 1890's. Its style is easy, realistic and relaxed.

Mrs. Miller. Tommy! Stop spinning your napkin ring! How often have I got to tell you? Mildred! Sit up straight in your chair! Do you want to grow up a humpback? Richard! Take your elbows off the table!

Miller. Well, well, well. Well, well, well. It's good to be home again.

Mrs. Miller. Oh! Nat, I do wish you wouldn't encourage that stupid girl by talking to her, when I'm doing my best to train--

Miller. All right, Essie. Your word is law! We did have the darndest fun today! And Sid was the life of that picnic! You ought to have heard him! Honestly, he had that crowd just rolling on the ground and splitting their sides! He ought to be on the stage.

Mrs. Miller. He ought to be at this table eating something to sober him up, that's what he ought to be! Sid! You come right in here! Here, Norah. Sit down, Nat, for goodness sakes. Start eating, everybody, Don't wait for me. You know I've given up soup.

Miller. Essie--Sid's sort of embarrassed about coming--I mean I'm afraid he's a little bit--not too much, you understand--but he met such a lot of friends and--well, you know, don't be hard on him. Fourth of July is like Christmas--comes but once a year. /Don't pretend to notice, eh? And don't you kids, you hear! And don't you, Lily. He's scared of you.

Lily. Very well, Nat.

Miller. All right, Sid. The coast's clear. Good soup, Essie! Good Soup!" [15]

O'Neill is very conscious of the style in which his characters speak. He wants them always to be true to themselves and often this makes their language seem cruel, coarse and brutal. He never spares them and if their interpretation calls for dynamic language he gives it to them.

O'Neill's diction is not all realistic, however; some of it is poetic in conception. Its execution is not always as poetic as it might be, but

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15. Eugene O'Neill, Ah, Wilderness!, pp. 62, 65.

the inspiration is there if the ability to express it is lacking. O'Neill himself feels this inadequacy in this note; "He admits that what his new play (Mourning Becomes Electra) needs is immortal poetry, and he is modest enough to confess that he is not the man to write it." [16] Mourning Becomes Electra is probably immortal in conception but its lines lack the polished clear cut lustre of Aeschylus and Shakespeare.

The Fountain is poetic in theme and the poetry is a recurrent spring throughout. It is a decided departure from his realistic style and it is not less forceful. Lazarus Laughed is also poetry. It is the most Grecian of his plays and it is a lovely classical poem in conception as well as in diction. This great play of affirmation is unique, startling and poetic in its entirety.

O'Neill's use of words is very striking in his directions. They are ladened with advice and suggestions to the actors and producers about what he means. In Marco Millions the stage directions contain some of the sharpest satire of the play. Another interesting use of words in the directions is when Cabot "turns green" in Desire. In Thirst we find "Here and there on the still surface of the sea the fins of sharks may be seen slowly cutting the surface of the water in lazy circles" In Marco Polo, "tears stream down the cheeks of Kukachin".

O'Neill suits "word to the action, the action to the word". He realizes the value of diction or he would not have troubled himself with appropriate dialects and accents.

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16. English Journal, Vol. 21, p. 702.

"I want to get down in words what people think and feel without relying upon the simple method of using suggestive silences. I want to find a way to make them say it in the rhythm of this country." [17]

Whether it is the rhythm of the Moon of the Carribees, Jones, Fountain, Strange Interlude, Mourning Becomes Electra, or Ah! Wilderness, the diction is spoken by the characters--in the mood that the play demands. If Yank needs the coarse speech of the sailor to give his background, O'Neill doesn't mince words. If Kukachin, the lovely princess in Marco Millions, needs the poetic diction of a beautiful, young girl, he is able to give her lines sincerely. Anna Christie needs the realistic Swedish dialect and it is hers. Nina is the sophisticated product of civilization, her speech is reflective of this and the dialect of Mourning Becomes Electra is repressed, significant and tragic. O'Neill realizes that words after all are the most effective means of communication, and he uses them as the mood of the play dictates, realistically or poetically.

17: Theatre Arts Monthly, Nov. 1931, Eugene O'Neill, John Anderson.

SUMMARIZATION

O'Neill's play forms are executed with one idea in mind; that is, the fitting of the form of the play to the tonal mood back of the conception of it. If it is a single picture of human disaster he clothes it adequately in the one act form, as in Before Breakfast. It is brief, poignant, but long enough to glimpse the utter frustration and maladjustment of two hopeless beings. If the idea back of the play calls for a more complicated structure O'Neill immediately creates the form that will care for it. The Emperor Jones must go through progressive stages of deterioration; consequently we follow his terrified wanderings through many scenes. O'Neill felt that the cycle of Strange Interlude could not be pictured in less than five hours; so the play consumes five hours, whether it inconveniences the audience or not. O'Neill's only concern is to portray this interlude in the life of Nina, Marsden, Darrell and Evans. The play's length does not seem revolutionary to him; it is necessary in developing the mood the play was written in. The entire tragic version of the Mannon's could not be reduced to a single evening. The time required for this majestic, classical trilogy to unfold was a three-evening play, and O'Neill could not condense it.

The action of his plays also fits into the plan of the whole. When O'Neill uses a dance, ballet, or chorus, it is to emphasize a theme, a tone, a note that O'Neill wants emphasized. These movements and actions are never out of place but always entirely fitting and appropriate to the impressionism of the piece.

The settings are just as carefully painted. Each one presents a picture clear, complete. If it is the drab, realism of Beyond the Horizon, we find each detail true, accurate and convincing of the atmosphere of the play itself. If the play demands opulence, O'Neill's sense of appropriateness easily paints a gorgeous fantasy, such as Marco Millions. If it furthers the mood of the play he borrows from the Greeks for Lazarus Laughed, the orient for Marco Millions, the stern puritanism of new England for Desire and Mourning Becomes Electra. He is not confined to one locality, but as his moods have variety, so do his plays reveal this in his settings.

Eugene O'Neill also creates his intensity of mood by his use of appropriate sounds and diction. The chorus and music add potent overtones to his productions. He also evokes his atmosphere for each particular play by the speech of his characters. Yank's brutal, forceful speech was not just a happen-so, but indeed a deep protest against the accepted order of so-called civilization. Jones' negro dialect is surely an aid to the intensity of the mood. Christine's cultivated New England accent is the proper pitch for Mourning Becomes Electra. Always the diction fits the idea, the mood, the situation, whether it is comic, tragic, realistic or poetic.

Although it is impossible to classify O'Neill's individualistic genius, it is not impossible to understand that he uses every technical device that he can think of to achieve that intensity of emotion, that tonal quality of impressionism that he gives us in each of his plays. And although he apparently breaks the unities that we are familiar with, he substitutes a higher, more modern unity of intensity--Expressionism, if you wish--that is satisfying to our baffled age.

"Perhaps I can explain", O'Neill writes, with doubt characteristic of the experimentalist and wide aspiration characteristic of the artist, "The nature of my feelings for the impelling, inscrutable, forces behind life which it is my ambition to at least faintly shadow at their work in my plays." [1]

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1. Barrett Clark, Eugene O'Neill, p. 83.

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All God's Chillun Got Wings
The Great God Brown
The Fountain
The Moon of the Caribbees.
Diff' rent

1922------The Long Voyage Home
In the Zone
The
Where the Cross is Made
The Rope
Bound East for Cardiff

1922------Beyond the Horizon
The Straw
Before Breakfast

1922------The Emperor Jones
Gold
The First Man
The Dreamy Kid

1924------Desire Under the Elms
The Hairy Ape
Welded

1927------Marco Williams

1927------Lazarus Laughed

1928------Strange Interlude

1929------Dynamo

1931------Mourning Becomes Electra
A Trilogy

1933------Ah, Wilderness!

1934------Days Without End

Pauline Streeter, Typist